The Revival of Tiantai Buddhism in the Late Ming:

On the Thought of Youxi Chuandeng 幽溪傳燈 (1554-1628)

Yungfen Ma

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
2011

© 2011
Yungfen Ma
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

The Revival of Tiantai Buddhism in the Late Ming:
On the Thought of Youxi Chuandeng 幽溪傳燈 (1554-1628)

Yungfen Ma

This dissertation is a study of Youxi Chuandeng's (1554-1628) transformation of "Buddha-nature includes good and evil," also known as "inherent evil," a unique idea representing Tiantai's nature-inclusion philosophy in Chinese Buddhism. Focused on his major treatise *On Nature Including Good and Evil*, this research demonstrates how Chuandeng, in his efforts to regenerate Tiantai, incorporated the important intellectual themes of the late Ming, especially those found in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.

In his treatise, Chuandeng systematically presented his ideas on doctrinal classification, the principle of nature-inclusion, and the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Redefining Tiantai doctrinal classification, he legitimized the idea of inherent evil to be the highest Buddhist teaching and proved the superiority of Buddhism over Confucianism. Drawing upon the notions of pure mind and the seven elements found in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, he reinterpreted nature-inclusion and the Dharma-gate of inherent evil emphasizing inherent evil as pure rather than defiled. Conversely, he reinterpreted the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* by nature-inclusion.

Chuandeng incorporated Confucianism and the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as a response to the dominating thought of his day, this being the particular manner in which previous Tiantai thinkers upheld, defended and spread Tiantai. What set Chuandeng apart from his predecessors were his efforts to harmonize rather than criticize other Buddhist schools.

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was emblematic of the syncretic intellectual trend of the late Ming and its popularity was widespread. Chuandeng ably took ideas from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to make his points.

Chuandeng was a culminator and innovator of nature-inclusion and his thought and activities represent the revival of Tiantai in the late Ming. This study proves that the Tiantai school was not a marginal but rather an active contributor to the overall revival of Buddhism in the late Ming.

TABLE of CONTENTS

List of Diagrams ii
Acknowledgments iii

Chapter 1 Introduction 1

Part I Chuandeng and the Development of Nature-inclusion Thought

Chapter 2 Chuandeng's Life 19
Early Life 20
Monastic Training and Teachers 22
The Revival of Gaoming Monastery 28
Activities to Revive Tiantai 37

Chapter 3 Zhiyi's "Buddha-nature Includes Good and Evil" Thought 47
Buddha-nature 47
Buddha-nature Includes Defilement and Purity 52
Zhiyi's Main Philosophical Framework 54
What is Good and Evil 61
Inherent Good and Inherent Evil 63
The Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil 68

Chapter 4 The Development of Nature-inclusion Thought from the Tang to the Yuan: Zhanran, Zhili and Huaize 76
Jingxi Zhanran 荊溪湛然 (711-782) 76
Siming Zhili 四明知禮 (960-1028) 83
Huxi Huaize 虎溪懷則 (fl. 1310) 94

Chapter 5 The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Late-Ming Buddhism 103
An Introduction to the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* 104
The Increasing Influence of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* from the Tang to the Mid-Ming 110
The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Late-Ming Syncretism of the Three Teachings 116
The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Late-Ming Buddhist Syncretism 124

Part II *On Nature Including Good and Evil*

Chapter 6 Doctrinal Classification 138
The Worldly Teaching 139
The Supra-mundane Teaching—The Five Periods 157

Chapter 7 Chuandeng's Theory on the Principle of Nature-inclusion 178
The First Gate: In Unchanging Suchness the Ten Realms are Hidden 179

The Second Gate: When Suchness Follows Conditions, the Ten Realms Become Differentiated 187
The Third Gate: The Unchanging Follows Conditions, the Non-differentiated Is the Differentiated 196
The Fourth Gate: Following Conditions yet without Change, Differentiated yet Non-Differentiated 215

Chapter 8 Chuandeng's Theory on the Practice of the Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil 227
The Fifth Gate: In the Causal Mind All Is Orginally Included and Nothing Is Lacking 228
The Sixth Gate: At the Stage of Fruition within the Perfect Realization, Nothing Has Changed 233
The Seventh Gate: When Perfectly Practicing by Following Pure Conditions, the Entirety of Practice Rests in Nature 251
The Eighth Gate: Following Pure Conditions to Reach Perfect Realization, Lifting One Thing and All Are Gathered within 269
Chuandeng's Conclusions 272

Chapter 9 Conclusion 280

Bibliography 292

LIST of DIAGRAMS

Diagram 1 192
Diagram 2 192
Diagram 3 192
Diagram 4 192
Diagram 5 192
Diagram 6 192
Diagram 7 193
Diagram 8 193
Diagram 9 193
Diagram 10 193
Diagram 11 193
Diagram 12 193

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I offer my deepest respect to the Buddha, whose profound teachings carried me throughout the process of writing this dissertation. I am greatly indebted to my monastic order, Chung Tai Chan Monastery, for the support provided me in every aspect during my studies. My most sincere gratitude goes to my master, Ven. Wei Chueh, who constantly enlightens me spiritually.

I thank my advisor, Dr. Chün-fang Yü, for she is the embodiment of the title of one of her works, *Guanyin*, the bodhisattva of compassion. Her insight, expertise and industrious attitude toward study have impacted my life and her continuous and timely responses to my questions were always given with heartwarming encouragement. I would like to thank Dr. ZhongWei Wu for his invaluable understanding on Tiantai thought and Dr. Jiang Wu for his helpful insights on Ming Tiantai. I am also grateful to Dr. Robert Thurman for his guidance and support throughout these years. A special thank you to Dr. Bernard Faure and Dr. Wendi Adamek for their helpful advice on my research. Thanks also to Dr. Micheal Como for his lighthearted conversations. To my Columbia friends and colleagues, your gracious friendship has been an important source of inspiration for me to continue my work.

I deeply appreciate the editorial assistance of Hernan Lavin, Liz Whiteford, Bessie Yu and Marilyn Wetmore. To Hernan, thank you for your selfless, tireless and patient editorial work. The completion of this dissertation is owed to your careful persistence and unequivocal faith in Chuandeng's teaching.

This work is dedicated to all sentient beings, including my family, with the hope that they will soon realize their true nature.

Chapter 1 Introduction

My dissertation is a study of the Tiantai concept of “nature-inclusion” (*xing ju* 性具) as developed by Youxi Chuandeng 幽溪傳燈 (1554-1628), particularly in his work *On Nature Including Good and Evil* (*Xin shan e lun* 性善惡論). Chuandeng, a prominent Buddhist monk, is traditionally honored as “the patriarch who revived the Tiantai school during the Ming dynasty.” His creative reinterpretation of “nature-inclusion,” a distinctive Tiantai understanding of Buddha-nature, played an important part in the revival of seventeenth century Tiantai Buddhism. Mainly based on the analysis of his treatise, I will discuss the intellectual influences that led to his innovative interpretation. Particular attention will be given to the influence the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* (one of the most important texts in later Chinese Buddhist history) had on Chuandeng’s thinking.

A Chinese school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Tiantai has had a major impact on East Asian Buddhism in general. It is the first Buddhist school to originate in China rather than in India. Indian Buddhism came to China two thousand years ago and, by the sixth century, the Chinese were introduced to a wide range of theories and practices of Indian Buddhist schools. It was not until the appearance of Tiantai during the Sui and Tang dynasties that Chinese Buddhism started to form an independent character. Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597), considered the founder of Tiantai, created his own doctrinal system that marked a new phase in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Tiantai also influenced, in varying degrees, later Chinese Buddhist schools such as Huayan, Chan (Japanese: Zen), and Pure Land. The significant influence of Tiantai thought is not limited to Chinese Buddhism but also extends to East Asian Buddhism. Tiantai teaching soon spread to

Japan and Korea and later became the Tendai school and the Cheontae school, founded by Saichō (767-822) and Uicheon (1055-1101) respectively. Both schools also impacted the indigenous religions of Japan and Korea. Tendai, in particular, exerted great influence on Japanese culture, as Paul L. Swanson states, "I was struck by the almost ubiquitous influence of the T'ien-t'ai/Tendai tradition in Japanese religion, culture, and history."[1]

Without a doubt, Tiantai thought is not only one of the leading philosophical systems in Chinese Buddhism but also a major contributor to world intellectual history. Based on a central Buddhist scripture, the *Lotus Sutra*, Zhiyi proposed a multidimensional and comprehensive system of thought. It is well-known for a variety of concepts such as the Doctrinal Classification (*pan jiao* 判教), known as the "Five periods and Eight Teachings" (*wu shi ba jiao* 五時八教)[2], a system used to classify the various types of teachings preached by the Buddha at different times of his life. Other concepts such as the "Threefold Truth of Perfect Interpenetration" (*yuan rong san di* 圓融三諦)[3], the

---

[1] Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-Tai Philosophy*, x, 155.

[2] The Five Periods refer to the chronological division of the Buddha's teachings and the eight teachings refer to the division according to method and doctrine. The five periods are: (1) Avataṃsaka period (*Huayan shi* 華嚴時) (2) Āgama period (*Ahan shi* 阿含時) (3) Vaipulya period (*Fangdeng shi* 方等時) (4) Prajñā period (*Bore shi* 般若時) (5) Lotus and Nirvāṇa period (*Fahua niepan shi* 法華涅槃時). The Five Periods will be discussed in detail in chapter six. The four teachings according to the nature of the doctrine are: (1) Tripiṭaka (*cang* 藏) (2) Common (*tong* 通) (3) Separate (*bie* 別) (4) Round (*yuan* 圓). These four teachings will be discussed in detail in chapters three and six. The four teachings according to the methods used by the Buddha are: (1) Sudden or Immediate (*dun* 頓); This is a suitable method for the audience who is able to grasp the ultimate truth immediately. (2) Gradual (*jian* 漸); This is used to lead the audience step by step from the elementary to the ultimate truth. (3) Secret (*mimi* 祕密); This is used by the Buddha when he speaks secretly to someone and only the addressee knows and understands. (4) Indeterminate (*buding* 不定); When the Buddha is teaching, the hearers understand differently. With these methods, the Buddha can be quiet in one place but speaking in another. When he is preaching one sutra, the sutra can have different meanings to different people.

[3] Zhiyi's view of Reality. Threefold Truth is comprised of the Empty, the Provisional, and the Middle. They are three aspects of Reality. These three are united and mutually included in and identical to one another. It reveals that all things in the universe coexist and interpenetrate, so it is called the Threefold Truth of Perfect Interpenetration. Details will be discussed in chapter three.

"Threefold Contemplation in One Mind" (*yi xin san guan* 一心三觀)[4], the "Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought" (*yi nian san qian* 一念三千)[5], the "Four Forms of Samādhi" (*si zhong san mei* 四種三昧)[6], and that of "Buddha-nature includes both good and evil" (*xing ju shan e* 性具善惡) are also well-known. These all represent Tiantai theoretical and practical systems that were never found in Indian Buddhism.

Of the various original concepts contained in Tiantai, it is the concept of "nature-inclusion" that captures the entire meaning of Tiantai philosophy. Nature-inclusion is the way in which Zhiyi views the relationship between all things and Reality (*shi xiang* 實相). "Nature" represents the original nature of all things, i.e. Reality, while "Inclusion" has two meanings: inherent inclusion (*ben ju* 本具) and mutual inclusion (*hu ju* 互具). "Nature-inclusion" means that all things are inherently included in nature and, at the same time, all things are mutually included in each other. This idea expresses that the existence of all things and the existence of nature are not in sequential order. As one scholar puts it, "All dharmas include each other by their own nature from the very beginning."[7] This is a fundamental difference from the "nature-origination" (*xing qi* 性起) thought of the Huayan school. Huayan thought sees nature as primal purity prior to the arising of all things that originate from it. These two competing ideas

[4] One of the Tiantai practices. Since one thought embodies Reality, thus Reality can be reached by simultaneously observing the Empty, Provisional, and Middle Truths within a single thought.

[5] Zhiyi considers that the entire universe includes three thousand worlds and that all the worlds coexist and interpenetrate within any one thought. Details will be discussed in chapter three.

[6] Zhiyi groups all practices into four categories: Samādhi of Constant Sitting 常坐三昧, Samādhi of Constant Walking 常行三昧, Samādhi of Half Walking and Half Sitting 半行半坐三昧, and Samādhi of Non-walking and Non-sitting 非行非坐三昧. See Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 11a.

[7] Ra, "The T'ien-t'ai Philosophy of Non-duality: A Study in Chan-jan and Chi-li," 78.

of Tiantai and Huayan dominated the philosophical developments in Chinese Buddhism.

Among all the different Tiantai concepts that center on the notion of "nature-inclusion," the claim that "Buddha-nature includes both good and evil" is most unusual. Its uniqueness consists in that evil is inherently included in Buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is understood in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* as a universal innate potential given to every sentient being and is the basis for awakening and becoming a Buddha. Traditionally, Buddha-nature, as ultimate Reality, is said to be the supreme purity that is free from duality and thus is neither good nor evil. In this sense, when Buddha-nature is described as "good," it means the supreme purity that transcends all opposites. Zhiyi, however, was the first Buddhist thinker to develop the idea that Buddha-nature includes evil.

Mahāyāna Buddhism's concept of Buddha-nature is at the core of Chinese Buddhism. Zhiyi's original idea not only set Tiantai doctrine apart from that of other schools but also opened a new course of thinking in Chinese Buddhism. Most Chinese Buddhist schools regard Buddha-nature as the mind-nature (*xin xing* 心性) of sentient beings. In other words, the nature of mind is the nature of sentient beings as well as the nature of Buddha, i.e., Reality. The four most influential Chinese Buddhist schools, which include two philosophical schools, Tiantai and Huayan, and two practical schools, Chan and Pure Land, all base the development of their distinctive features on Buddha-nature. Huayan's nature-origination thought sees mind-nature as the primal purity prior to and the source of the arising of all things. As observed by Robert Gimello, "[T]he full diversity of sentient experience and the experienced world…is seen to rest

upon or to grow from a common noetic source."[8] From the perspective of practice, Chan emphasizes "self-power" by which one sees one's own mind-nature thus directly accomplishing Buddhahood. In contrast to Chan, Pure Land highlights "other-power," i.e., that of a Buddha, in which one repeats the name of a Buddha or contemplates the Buddha to attain the state of the undisturbed one-mind so as to be reborn in the pure land. All of these schools teach that Buddha-nature is supreme purity and contains only the good. But Tiantai alone proclaims that Buddha-nature contains not only the good but also the evil.

The basis of this creative idea is the theory of nature-inclusion. In terms of mind-nature as Buddha-nature, Tiantai thought sees the mutual inclusiveness of all things and mind. It rejects the mind as the primal purity prior to all things. This rejection denotes that the ten realms[9] of all sentient beings from hell to Buddhahood are inherently included in Buddha-nature and that the ten realms are mutually included in each other. Thus, Buddha-nature inherently includes the good of Buddha and the evil of sentient beings. Moreover, the evil and the good are mutually included in each other as well. In other words, all sentient beings inherently possess the good of Buddhas and all Buddhas inherently possess the evil of sentient beings. It is this very novel idea that differentiates Tiantai Buddha-nature thought from that of other schools.

Later Tiantai thinkers developed and upheld this unique idea, especially that of "Buddha-nature includes evil," also known as "inherent evil" (*xing e* 性惡). For instance, Jingxi Zhanran 荊溪湛然 (711-782) of the Tang dynasty declared, "*Tathāgatas*[10] do not

---

[8] Gimello, "Chih-yen (602-668) and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism," 411.

[9] Buddhist ten divisions of the universe: hell-being, hungry ghost, animal, asura, human, god, śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, bodhisattva, and Buddha.

[10] 如來 (*ru lai*), interpreted as "Thus-come One," one of the titles of a Buddha.

cut off the inherent evil and *icchantikas*[11] do not cut off the inherent good. When this meaning alone is pointed out, all the hindrances [to the understanding of the truth] will automatically disappear."[12] Siming Zhili 四明知禮 (960-1028) of the Song dynasty asserted, "Just this one single word—inclusion (*ju* 具)—clearly reveals [the doctrine of] our school. The masters of other schools also know that Buddha-nature includes good, but none of them know that [Buddha-nature] as Conditioning Cause and Revealing Cause[13] also includes evil."[14] Moreover, Huxi Huaize 虎溪懷則 (fl.1310) of the Yuan dynasty maintained, "Today, the achievement of nature-inclusion thought lies in inherent evil."[15] While the Tiantai thinkers criticized other schools for not knowing inherent evil, they upheld "inherent evil" as the highest teaching of Tiantai. Thus "inherent evil" gradually came to represent "nature-inclusion" thought and vice versa. Both "inherent evil" and "nature-inclusion" were regarded as primary representations of Tiantai philosophy.

It is this very unique idea that attracted me to study nature-inclusion thought, particularly the idea that Buddha-nature includes good and evil. I found, however, that most studies on Tiantai thought in both Asia and the West concentrate on periods prior to the Ming. Tiantai in the Ming, however, has been widely ignored by Western and Asian

---

[11] 一闡提 (*yi chan ti*), traditionally meant the one who has cut off his roots of goodness.

[12] Zhanran, *Zhi quan fu xing chuan hong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘决, T46: 296a.

[13] Zhiyi classifies Buddha-nature into three types of causes for attaining Buddhahood: Buddha-nature as the direct cause (*zheng yin fo xing* 正因佛性), that all beings are inherently endowed with the principle or nature of the Buddha; Buddha-nature as Revealing Cause (*liao yin fo xing* 了因佛性), the wisdom which illumines or realizes Buddha-nature; Buddha-nature as Conditioning Cause (*yuan yin fo xing* 緣因佛性), the goodness and merits that result in Buddhahood.

[14] Zhili, *Quan yin xuan yi ji* 觀音玄義記, T34: 905a.

[15] Huaize, *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記, T46: 934a.

scholars alike. In contrast to Chan and Pure Land, Tiantai philosophy is complex and vast. This might be the reason why few Western scholars have pursued it. There have indeed been studies on individual Tiantai masters. The thoughts of Zhiyi, Zhanran, and Zhili have all received scholarly attention. For example, Leon Hurvitz wrote a pioneering work on Zhiyi. Paul Swanson discusses Zhiyi's "Threefold Truth," while Daniel B. Stevenson explores Zhiyi's "four forms of samādhi." Linda Penkower focuses on Zhanran. Chi-wah Chen concentrates on Zhili. Lang E. Ra. studies both Zhanran and Zhili. Brook Ziporyn's *Evil and/or/as The Good: Omnicentrism, Intersubjectivity, and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought* makes a comprehensive and detailed analysis of Zhili's ideas on "inherent evil." But the apparent indifference to Ming Tiantai offers us little knowledge about Tiantai thought after the Song.

It could be said that another reason why scholars have neglected to study Ming Tiantai is because Ming Buddhism is generally regarded as a period of decline. In particular, many scholars consider that the philosophical schools of Tiantai and Huayan were lifeless and that only the Chan and Pure Land schools continued to expand and grow in this period. Only in recent decades has late-Ming Buddhism attracted the concern of scholars and become a field of study. Araki Kengo regards this period as the period of New Buddhism,[16] and Chün-fang Yü considers this phase in Chinese Buddhism a "renewal." Most studies on the Ming focus on the four great masters and offer a picture of the syncretic trend that was underway. For example, Chün-fang Yü's study is on Zhuhong 袾宏 (1535-1615), Sung-peng Hsu's on Hanshan 憨山 (1546-1623), Jonathan C. Cleary's on Zhenke 真可 (1543-1602), and Shengyen's on Zhixu 智旭

[16] Araki, *Bukkyō to Yōmeigaku* 佛教と陽明學, 98.

(1599-1655). Moreover, Judith Berling's study on Lin Chao'en 林兆恩, known for his thought on the "Three Teachings in One," and Timothy Brook's study on how Ming Buddhism influenced the Chinese gentry also provides us with important information about Buddhist activities in other fields during that period. All these studies, however, mainly emphasize the continuing expansion of Chan and Pure Land and there is no dedicated study of Tiantai in the Ming. This disregard has led to the misunderstanding that the Tiantai doctrine was in serious decline in the late Ming. Thus, the contributions of Tiantai thinkers, such as Chuandeng in the Ming, have so far been neglected.

Even though scholars, on the one hand, have ignored Chuandeng, the Chinese Buddhist tradition itself, on the other, has honored him as the patriarch who revived the Tiantai school in the late Ming. He brought the school back to the prosperity that was lost in the Song. He rebuilt Gaoming Monastery (*gaoming si* 高明寺) on Mt. Tiantai, and turned it into a famous monastery. Dedicated to giving sutra lectures and promoting meditation and repentance rituals, he attracted a large number of monks and lay followers. His contributions to the Tiantai teachings were even more significant. He was a prolific writer, comparable to the four great masters. Most of his works express the nature-inclusion thought, the central pillar of his philosophy. Thus, a study on Chuandeng's thought is valuable for a better understanding of Ming Tiantai as well as Ming Buddhism.

I first discovered Chuandeng's thought while researching Ming Tiantai under the guidance of Professor Chün-fang Yü. We spent a semester reading and discussing Chuandeng's *On Nature Including Good and Evil*. This treatise, written in his later years, systematically presents his nature-inclusion thought as a whole. What I discovered was

his completely new approach to nature-inclusion thought. I was surprised to find Chuandeng's heavy reliance on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra,* something never seen in that of his predecessors. He used the sutra as the basis to reinterpret both the theory of "nature including good and evil" and the practice of the "Dharma-gate of inherent evil" (*xing e fa men* 性惡法門) which is unique to Tiantai. Moreover, he used the idea of "nature including good and evil" as the rationale to modify Zhiyi's doctrinal classification system in order to claim Tiantai's authority over other Buddhist traditions and the superiority of Buddhism over other religions, especially Confucianism. Chuandeng's nature-inclusion thought reflects the important contemporary intellectual forces he incorporated into his rationale and to which he artfully responded. As I traced back the development of nature-inclusion, I was surprised by how Tiantai thinkers in earlier times did likewise in developing the idea of "nature including good and evil." Like Chuandeng, they also incorporated contemporary influential teachings to uphold Tiantai's authority.

On Nature Including Good and Evil is the primary source of my research in investigating the changes of Ming Tiantai thought. The treatise includes six fascicles. In terms of the contents, there are three parts. The first part, fascicle 1, is Chuandeng's doctrinal classification system. The second part, fascicles 1 and 2, is his reinterpretation of the principle of "nature including good and evil." The third part, fascicles 2 through 6, is his reinterpretation on the practice of the "Dharma-gate of inherent evil." Using the three parts of Chuandeng's reinterpretations as the basis, I discuss how Tiantai thinkers developed nature-inclusion thought by drawing from the larger intellectual forces of their time.

Chapter two is about Chuandeng, his intellectual background and major activities

that led to the revival of Tiantai. Chapters three and four offer an overview of the intellectual history of the idea of "nature includes good and evil" in the periods before the Ming. It is necessary to examine the ways in which Chuandeng's predecessors developed this idea in order to have a better understanding of Chuandeng's thought. After Zhiyi proposed that Buddha-nature includes inherent good and inherent evil, it was further developed by Zhanran in the Tang, by Zhili in the Song, and by Huaize in the Yuan. To explain Zhiyi's nature-inclusion, Zhanran absorbed from the Huayan the dynamics of "unchanging suchness[17] that follows conditions" (*zhen ru bu bian sui yuan* 真如不變隨緣). Building on Zhanran's contribution, Zhili further elaborated nature-inclusion by the well-known Buddhist notion of "identity" (*ji* 即). Lastly, I discuss how Huaize developed it through the Chan idea of "transmission of the Mind-seal of the Buddha" *(chuan fo xin yin* 傳佛心印). These chapters demonstrate a common stylistic thread running through the efforts that these Tiantai thinkers made to express, develop, and defend nature-inclusion; they all incorporated new elements that reflected the larger intellectual trends of their time.

Chapter five examines the influence the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* had throughout the Ming. The sutra reached an apex of popularity and was one of the most influential, commented, and studied Buddhist texts in late-Ming intellectual circles. This sutra was a catalyzing text in the syncretic trend underway in the late Ming. This provides the historical context for understanding why Chuandeng incorporated the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* into his thought.

Chapters six through chapter eight analyze Chuandeng's *On Nature Including Good*

---

[17] This word is fundamental to Mahāyāna philosophy, implying the absolute, the ultimate source, and character of all things. It is also another name for Budddha-nature.

and Evil. Chapter six discusses his doctrinal classification system. I take Zhiyi's formulation of doctrinal classification as a basis to examine the changes Chuandeng made to the system. We will see that Chuandeng was the first Tiantai thinker to elevate the idea of "nature including good and evil" being the ultimate teaching the Buddha taught throughout his life. He also used the idea to create a hierarchical synthesis of Buddhism and Chinese indigenous thought, especially Confucianism. He regarded nature-inclusion as the theory that can unite Buddhism and Confucianism, yet at the same time, he also creatively demonstrated the philosophical and spiritual inferiority of Confucian thought compared to Buddhism. Chuandeng's unique formulations brought into focus how he upheld nature-inclusion as the highest Buddhist teaching.

Chapter seven examines his reinterpretation of the principle of nature-inclusion thought. Chuandeng's reinterpretation integrated the theories of his predecessors. We will see how he used the notions of "unchanging suchness that follows conditions" and "identity" as the framework by which he formulated his reinterpretation. Where Chuandeng is different, however, is in his use of the idea of "pure mind" (*qing jing xin* 清淨心) as formulated in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. In his understanding, there is no conflict between inherent evil and the pure mind. The topic of "pure mind" is a Huayan notion that had always been criticized by Chuandeng's predecessors and had been the cause of many sectarian confrontations between Tiantai and other schools. Borrowing the way in which the sutra explains pure mind, Chuandeng expressed that the nature that includes good and evil is the very same pure mind.

Chapter eight explores his reinterpretation on the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. This practice was proposed by Zhiyi and especially promoted by Zhili.

What is novel about it is that doing evil is also a gate to becoming a Buddha. It is grounded on the concept that the good and the evil are mutually included in each other. Through understanding that inherent evil contains good, one can reach the good of Buddha-nature and thus become a Buddha. Zhili further developed the practice by using the idea of "identity" and showed that cultivated evil is identical to inherent evil (*xiu e ji xing e* 修惡即性惡). Cultivated evil is a term directly associated with inherent evil. Broadly speaking, whereas inherent evil is the evil that is latent in Buddha-nature, cultivated evil is created. Furthermore, Tiantai thinkers claim that cultivated evil is the manifestation of inherent evil and thus there is no difference between cultivated evil and inherent evil. In other words, through understanding evil, one can become a Buddha when one's cultivated evil returns to inherent evil because inherent evil is no different from Buddha-nature. Chuandeng's reinterpretation follows the thought of his predecessors, especially Zhili's standpoint. However, Chuandeng's difference is that he absorbed the various practices advocated by the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to explain the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Under his reinterpretation, he redefined the practices of the sutra as the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Also, we will see that under the syncretic trend, Chuandeng drew upon the sutra to express the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in order to enhance the authority of Tiantai.

This research is the first step in my investigation of Tiantai Buddhism in the Ming. Chuandeng's nature-inclusion thought was critical for the survival and revival of the Tiantai school in the late Ming. Through an analysis of *On Nature including Good and Evil*, we will see that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was his most important philosophical tool to spread and revive Tiantai teaching during this period.

Before we move on to examine Chuandeng's life, it is useful to have an overview of Ming Buddhism, in particular that of late-Ming Buddhism.

Ming Buddhism can be generally divided into three periods. The early Ming, which comprised the reigns of Emperors Hongwu 洪武 and Yongle 永樂, lasted about sixty years (1368-1424); the mid-Ming, placed between the Yongle era and the Wanli 萬曆 era, lasted about one-hundred fifty years (1424-1573); and the late Ming, which began during the Wanlin era, lasted about seventy years (1573-1644).

During the Sui-Tang periods, many distinctly Chinese Buddhist schools began to flourish. Over time, these different schools started to incorporate each other's doctrines to respectively enhance their own philosophies. This process of mutual incorporation has been dubbed "syncretism" by scholars. By the late Ming, syncretism was at its peak affecting Buddhism from within as well as its relationship with other Chinese traditions. This momentous intellectual change has affected Chinese Buddhism up until the present day.

To a certain degree, syncretism in late-Ming Buddhism was a response to the internal degeneration occurring during early and mid-Ming Buddhism. From the beginning of the Ming, political power played an important role in shaping Ming Buddhism. Emperor Hongwu used monk-officials (*seng guan* 僧官) to control every aspect of Buddhist activities and categorized Buddhist monasteries into Meditation (Chan 禪), Preaching (*jiang* 講), or Ritual (*jiao* 教) monasteries. Chan (Meditation) monks and Preaching monks had to remain in their monasteries to concentrate on meditation and scriptural study respectively. Except for learning purposes, a monk was not allowed to travel. Only Ritual monks, also called Yoga monks (*yuqui seng* 瑜伽僧), were

encouraged to perform Buddhist rituals in people's homes. This tripartite division was a modification of the earlier system of the Yuan dynasty by replacing Discipline (*lu* 律, Skt.: Vinaya) with Ritual. With the abolishment of the Discipline category, most monks did not study Buddhist precepts. The growing number of Ritual monks became more concerned with the monetary benefit of performing rituals which precipitated the secularization of the monastic order.[18] Furthermore, Chan monks neglected scriptural study, while Preaching monks neglected meditation. This new classification system also prompted discord among the different schools. As Chan monk Wuyi Yuanlai 無異元來 (1575-1630) described, "the Chan and the Vinaya do not consult each other. *Zong* 宗 (Chan school) and *Jiao* 教 (the schools of scriptural teaching) do not learn from each other."[19] Hanshan, one of the late-Ming four great masters, insightfully pointed out that this monastic classification starting from the early Ming was a major factor for the later monastic decline.[20]

Mid-Ming Buddhism was a period of serious degeneration. Buddhism in this period did not disappear but manifested itself in neglect of discipline, secularization, and corruption. Chün-fang Yü comments, "The decline was spiritual rather than material."[21] To increase government revenues, the imperial government turned to the large-scale sales of ordination certificates. This practice increased the number of Buddhist monks which

---

[18] Yü, "Ming Buddhism," 906-907. See also her *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, 147-150, 179.

[19] See Wuyi, *Wuyi Yuanlai chan shi guang lu* 無異元來禪師廣錄, X72: 380a. "禪律不相謀. 宗教不相為也." *Zong* 宗 and *Jiao* 教 indicate the Chan school and the school of scriptural teaching. Zong is originally the general name for all Buddhist schools but later refers specifically to the Chan school. All other schools, such as Tiantai and Huayan, are called *Jiao*, schools of scriptural teachings because they rely on the written word.

[20] Hanshan. *Hanshan lao ren meng you ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, X73: 603c-604a.

[21] Yü, "Ming Buddhism," 918.

rapidly led to their corruption. During the Jingtai 景泰 era (1450-1456) and the Chenghua 成化 era (1465-1487), the sale of ordination certificates created more than 500,000 Buddhist and Daoist monks, prompting a government official to make the exaggerated remark that "at present monks are about half our population."[22] With payment, it was very easy for anyone to become a Buddhist monk, whereas, before, it was necessary to take a specialized field examination in any of the three monastery categories. In fact, many people became monks to escape taxation and labor. Other monks kept wives, brought up children, and committed crimes.[23] Thus, the social status and religious virtue of the monastic order eroded drastically. Criticism of the neglect of the discipline, the secularization, the discord, and the corruption among different schools was rife in many Ming Buddhist works. Chan's degeneration was criticized most because it was the dominant school.[24] Mid-Ming Buddhism was indeed in a period of serious decline.

This period of decline ultimately triggered the revival of Buddhism in the late Ming. Many dedicated monks, such as the four great masters and Chuandeng, became determined to reform Buddhism. Their efforts in regenerating Buddhism resulted in a "large-scale convergence and integration"[25] of the different schools. This syncretic approach saved the monastic order from its overall decline and ensured the continuation of Chinese Buddhism. This new approach stressed both scriptural teachings and practical cultivation. It also emphasized both practices of Chan and Pure Land, as well as

---

[22] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, 161.

[23] Yü, "Ming Buddhism," 919.

[24] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, 144.

[25] Lu Cheng 呂澂, *Zhongguo fo xue yuan liu lue jiang* 中國佛學源流略講, 273. "大規模的融會貫通"

discipline and the performance of rituals. Shengyan called this new approach "the complete unity."[26] The four great masters, Zhuhong, Hanshan, Zhenke, and Zhixu provide the evidence of this new syncretic tendency. They rejected any lineage affiliation with any school[27] and even though the ways in which they taught Buddhism were different, they made efforts to emphasize the unity of all schools. In general, they commonly advocated the "unity of Chan and scriptural teachings" in terms of doctrine and the "dual practice of Chan and Pure Land" in terms of practice. Syncretism was the hallmark of Buddhism and was the key to its revival in the late Ming.

In addition to the appearance of prominent monks, the lay Buddhist movement was another major contributor to the revival of Buddhism. Most members of the movement were Confucian intellectuals, including scholars and government officials. In the Ming, Neo-Confucianism was the dominant thought, but its intellectual direction shifted from the Heaven Principle (*tian li* 天理) advocated by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), to the Mind Learning (*xin xue* 心學) thought proposed by Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1528). This shift gave a fresh impetus to the trend of the "Three Teachings in One" in that Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism for the first time simultaneously regarded "mind-nature" as the ultimate nature. Consequently, as Araki Kengo and Timothy Brook point out, a great many Confucian intellectuals automatically turned to Buddhism to seek what they considered a deeper philosophy of mind-nature.[28] On the one hand, Buddhist monks taught the literati Buddhism and, on the other hand, they claimed the Three

---

[26] Shengyan, *Ming mo fo jiao yan jiu* 明末佛教研究, 4. "全面的統一"

[27] Shengyan, *Ming mo Zhongguo fo jiao zhi yan jiu* 明末中國佛教之研究, 72-73.

[28] Brook, *Praying for Power*, 55, 61.

Teachings in One, especially the unity of Confucianism and Buddhism. Accordingly, each prominent Buddhist monk attracted a large number of literati-followers as evidenced in the *Jushi zhuan* 居士傳 (*Biographies of lay Buddhists*),[29] compiled by Peng Jiqing 彭際清 (1740-1796) in the Qing dynasty. Of the170 famous Ming lay Buddhists, 104 lived in the late Ming and most were associated with prominent Buddhist monks.[30]

Chuandeng was also caught up in this syncretic climate and was an important figure for the revival of Buddhism in the late Ming. Like the four great masters, he simultaneously advocated scriptural teachings, Chan, Pure Land, discipline, and rituals in response to the decline of Buddhism. But, unlike them, he claimed adherence to the lineage of Tiantai and aimed all his efforts at reviving the Tiantai school.

---

[29] See Peng Jiqing, *Ju shi zhuan* 居士傳, X88: 180a.

[30] Shengyan, *Ming mo fo jiao yan jiu* 明末佛教研究, 281.

PART I

Chuandeng and the Development of Nature-inclusion Thought

Chapter 2 Chuandeng's Life

Chuandeng, also known as Youxi 幽溪, Wujin 無盡 or Youmen 有門, lived from 1554 to 1628, a time that mostly fell during the late Ming period (1573-1644). The primary sources for his biography are Chuandeng's written works, particularly two, the *Youxi Gazetteer* (*Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志) and the *Gazetteer of Those Who Lived Beyond the Secular World on Mt. Tiantai* (*Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志). These two gazetteers are collections of written accounts about everything related to the history and activities of the Gaoming Monastery and the Tiantai Mountain area.

For the *Youxi Gazetteer*, Chuandeng recorded most of the activities surrounding the Gaoming (also known as Youxi) Monastery starting from its history to how he rebuilt it. It includes a variety of articles, inscriptions and letters written by his friends, disciples, and lay followers. It is hard to say when Chuandeng started to compile and edit the *Youxi Gazetteer*, but records show he wrote the preface at age seventy-one.[1] Whereas the *Youxi Gazetteer* focuses primarily on the rebuilding of the Gaoming Monastery, the Mt. Tiantai gazetteer is a detailed record of the Mt. Tiantai area itself. Finished when Chaundeng was forty-eight,[2] it recounts geographical features of the area, Chuandeng's early life in Buddhism, and the current conditions of Buddhism in general and Tiantai Buddhism in particular.

Both publications offer rich descriptions of the era in which Chuandeng lived and

---

[1] Chuandeng, "Tiantai shan Youxi bie zhi xu" 天台山幽溪別志序 (Preface to Tiantai Mountain's Youxi Gazetteer), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 15.

[2] Chuandeng, "Tiantai shan fang wai zhi xu" 天台山方外志序 (Preface to the Gazetteers of *Those Who Lived Beyond the Secular World on Mt. Tiantai*), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 15.

provide valuable information about the monks under which he studied, his interactions with various people, and the way he taught Buddhism. Records of his lectures and rituals reveal his particularly close attention to the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經).

Early Life

Chuandeng was born in 1554 during the 33rd year of the Jiajing 嘉靖 reign[3] in the county of Sanqu in Zhejiang province.[4] Zhejiang province is known as the place where Tiantai originated and, for centuries, was considered one of the most important provinces in the development of Chinese Buddhism. His father, Ye Juquan 葉橘泉, was a doctor, and his mother, Madam Zhang 張氏, a devout Buddhist.[5] Scant information is to be found on Chuandeng's early life, but there is no doubt that he received a solid Confucian education during his early years.[6] His writings demonstrate his extensive and profound understanding of Confucian as well as Daoist classics. In fact, "by the late Ming period, Confucian and Daoist classics were the cultural inheritance of all educated Chinese."[7] Chuandeng's deep knowledge of Confucianism helped him influence the scholars and government officials associated with him.

He was inspired to become a monk by reading *Longshu's Pure Land Anthology*

---

[3] See Wang Shichang 王士昌, "Shou seng deng qi zhi xu" 壽僧燈七秩序 (Essay Celebrating Master Chuandeng's 70th Anniversary), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 561.

[4] The Sanqu county 三衢縣 is corresponding to the present-day Longyou county 龍遊縣 in Zhejiang province. See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘 (Stupa Inscription for Master Youmen), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 446.

[5] Ibid.

[6] See Wang Shichang 王士昌, "Shou seng deng qi zhi xu" 壽僧燈七秩序, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 561.

[7] Yü, "Ming Buddhism," 939.

(*Longshu jingtu wen* 龍舒淨土文) by Wang Longshu 王龍舒 (d.1173).[8] Wang abandoned his Confucian career as an advanced scholar of the National School (*guoxue jinshi* 國學進士) and devoted himself to the Pure Land practice. He asserted that Confucianism was not the ultimate truth and advocated the Pure Land practice while demonstrating reconciliation between Chan and Pure Land. Although it is unclear what in the text moved Chuandeng to become a monk, it is clear that he was exposed to Pure Land teaching in his early years and the idea of reconciliation resonated with him.

His final decision to become a monk resulted from the loss of his father at age twenty. After he escorted his father's coffin home all the way from Panyu 番禺 (in present-day Guandong province), he took an oath to become a monk and went on a pilgrimage to Putuo Shan 普陀山, a major Guanyin 觀音 (Skt.: Avalokiteśvara) site of worship. However, he did not obtain his mother's permission for ordination until he was twenty-six (1579) because she had concerns about her son's health.[9] Chuandeng's constant filial devotion was expressed not only to his parents but also to his monastic teachers later in his life. As a monk, he proposed a theory in his essay "On Filial Piety, Loyalty, Love, and Respect" that filial piety, together with loyalty, is essential to world peace. In this essay he said, "While a master is giving lessons to a disciple, their interaction also gracefully contains the way between monarch and subject and between father and son."[10] His monastic values were apparently still under the influence of Confucianism.

---

[8] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 446.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Chuandeng, "Zhong xiao ai jing lun" 忠孝愛敬論 (On Filial Piety, Loyalty, Love and Respect), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 635.

Monastic Training and Teachers

Chuandeng was significantly influenced by two teaching masters, Chan master Ying'an 暎菴 (1546-1579) and Tiantai master Baisong 百松 (1538-1589). Ying'an tonsured Chuandeng in 1579 and died soon after. According to Chuandeng, Ying'an taught Chan at Mt. Tiantai and many highly respected monks and the cultured elites, otherwise known as the gentry, approached him. For Chuandeng, "Ying'an's Chan words and clear speech always strike the golden stone. The audience was delighted and many were inspired and enlightened." Chuandeng definitely was one of them. While Chuandeng was traveling to Mt. Wutai 五台山, Ying'an died. Ying'an's dying words marked a major turning point in Chuandeng's life, as Chuandeng was deeply impressed by the message left for him on the back of *Anthology of Yongjia of the Chan School* (*Chanzong Yongjia ji* 禪宗永嘉集), an important text of the Chan school. Ying'an wrote, "If [you] can pursue the advanced meaning in this text and become awakened to it, there will be no longer a need to regret the lack of worthy figures in Buddhism." Upon Chuandeng's return, he reported, "[I] knelt, held it and read it, and thus wept bitterly. To this day, I haven't forgotten his virtuous voice or his handwriting."[11] Even though the time he studied under Ying'an was short, Chuandeng's life was deeply impacted by Ying'an's vision. As a Chan disciple of Ying'an, Chuandeng decided to learn first about the teaching and practice of Tiantai. He had observed that the great master Yongjia 永嘉 (665-713), the author of the *Anthology of Yongjia*, was awakened by the Tiantai teaching

---

[11] Chuandeng, "Ying'an Chuandan Chan shi" 暎菴傳玥禪師 (Chan Master Ying'an Chuandan), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, p.95.

and later received confirmation of enlightenment from Huineng (638-713), the sixth patriarch of Chan. Furthermore, Chuandeng sees, through Yongjia's experience, that there is no conflict between Chan and scriptural teachings.[12] Chuandeng would assert this idea for the rest of his life and, at sixty-nine, using primarily Tiantai thought, wrote a commentary on the book his master gave him calling it *Commentary on Anthology of the Chan school of Yongjia* (*Yongjia chanzong ji zhu* 永嘉禪宗集註).[13] As we can see, his attitude toward the "unity of Chan and scriptural teachings" was rooted in this book left by his teacher during his early monastic training.

Chuandeng and Baisong met the same year Ying'an died. During a deep Samādhi, Chuandeng saw an old monk talking to him, "If you do not depart from [your mind] in the four forms of demeanor[14], you will be able to listen to the lectures on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*." Although it is difficult to judge Chuandeng's concentration level, this suggests that he pursued the teaching of these two sutras after practicing Tiantai meditation for a short time. After visiting several famous masters, Chuandeng finally met Baisong.[15] Under Baisong's instructions, Chuandeng had his initial enlightenment.

Like Chuandeng, Baisong shifted his personal study from Chan to Tiantai. Chuandeng studied under Baisong for ten years until his teacher's death. During those ten years, he built a solid foundation in Tiantai teaching and in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. As

---

[12] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴,"Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 446.

[13] Chuandeng, *Yongjia chanzong ji zhu* 永嘉禪宗集註, X63: 282b.

[14] The four forms of demeanor are walking, standing, sitting and lying down. Maintaining the correct demeanor while in any of the four postures is part of Buddhist practice.

[15] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 446-447.

Chuandeng recalled, "I learned Tiantai from the great master Baisong, who greatly illuminated the essential thought of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[16] For Chuandeng, Baisong was the critical catalyst of his initial enlightenment at age twenty-nine (1582). It happened while Baisong was giving lectures on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* in the Shengshui Monastery (*Shengshui si* 聖水寺, in present-day Taizhou). As he described,

> "One day I entered [the master's] room where there was no one else. I knelt and put my palms together to ask about the Great Concentration [in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*]. The master simply opened wide his eyes and looked around, keeping silent without a word. At that moment, I had a great awakening."[17]

Their interaction points to their Chan background and their focused attention on the sutra. This inspiring experience led to Chuangdeng's constant practice of the Great Concentration (Śūraṃgama Samādhi). Based on a five-year practice, at thirty-four he composed his first work, *The Profound Meaning of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan xuanyi* 楞嚴玄義).[18] In fact, as will be discussed in later chapters, not only his practice but also his thought as a whole were significantly rooted in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.

Baisong valued Chuandeng's intelligence and eloquence. After he first listened to Baisong's lecture on the *Lotus Sutra*, he was able to fill in for Baisong to lecture on the sutra right away. After Chuandeng attended a second lecture on the same sutra, Baisong made Chuandeng his successor and formally bestowed upon him the dharma-robe of the Tiantai lineage.[19] Baisong praised Chuandeng by saying, "You obtain my marrow."[20] As

---

[16] Chuandeng, *Lengyan jing yuantong shu qianmao* 楞嚴經圓通疏前茅, X14: 685a.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid. *Lengyan xuanyi* 楞嚴經玄義 is collected in X13, no. 282.

[19] See Han Jing 韓敬, "Chong xing gaoming si bei ji" 重興高明寺碑記 (An Inscription for the Rebuilding of Gaoming Monastery), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 89.

[20] See Chen Chaofu 陳朝輔, "Zeng seng deng qi shi shou xu" 贈僧燈七十壽序 (Bestowing Essay for Master Chuandeng on his 70th Anniversary), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 567.

a disciple, Chuandeng always showed Baisong filial obedience. When Baisong died, he immediately stopped his lecture in Siming 四明 (present-day Ningbo 寧波) and hastened back, taking a three-year retreat in mourning for his death.[21]

It is necessary to further examine Baisong to better understand Tiantai Buddhism in the Ming. It is fair to say that Baisong, also known as Miaofeng Zhenjue 妙峰真覺, is the precursor to the revival of late-Ming Tiantai Buddhism. Baisong studied under Chan master Qiansong Yueting 千松月亭 (1531-1588), who was also a specialist of Huayan teaching. Baisong eventually parted with his master over a disagreement about the interpretation of the Tiantai doctrine. For Baisong, Qiansong's explanation of the "nature-inclusion" idea, being based on Huayan understanding, created ambiguity. This led to a debate between them.[22] Baisong questioned Qiansong about the meaning of Six Identities (six stages of the process of becoming a Buddha; a Tiantai term that will be discussed in later chapters). Qiansong insisted that the six identities should be regarded as six separate levels and he did not accept Baisong's idea that the six identities were in fact mutually included in each other. Later, Baisong would find Zhili's (960～1028) explanation of the Tiantai doctrine on nature-inclusion as explained convincingly in the latter's *Subcommentary on the Sutra of the Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* (*Guan wuliangshou fo jing shu miaozong chao* 觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔 or *Miaozong chao* 妙宗鈔).[23] Zhili's writings would also greatly influence

---

[21] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 448.

[22] The debate is recorded in "Jiaxing Dongchan si shamen Shi Mingde chuan san" 嘉興東禪寺沙門釋明得傳 (The biography of monk Shi Mingde of the Dongchan Monastery in Jiaxing), *Da mning gao seng zhuan* 大明高僧傳 (*Great Ming Biographies of Eminent Monks*), T50: 913a-b.

[23] Chuandeng, "Shi ba zu Baisong zun zhe" 十八祖百松尊者 (The Eighteenth Patriarch Baisong), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 198-99.

Chuandeng's further development on nature-inclusion as we will see in later chapters. Consequently, Baisong devoted himself to preaching the nature-inclusion doctrine and became an outstanding Tiantai master.

By the mid-Ming, the Tiantai nature-inclusion doctrine had all but disappeared from the general discourse. Many records by Baisong's contemporaries show this decline. As one of his lay followers, Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1546-1605), a famous scholar-official, described:

> "In the Song era, the Tiantai teaching was flourishing. Monks and lay disciples alike, and even the Confucian gentry, all could discuss it. … Now it is just four or five hundred years later and throughout the country no monk can speak even one word about Tiantai, let alone the gentry. Miaofeng [Zhen]jue (Baisong) has spared no effort [in teaching it], he is like a lonely phoenix singing loudly for almost 20 years. Other preachers laughed at him in secret and denounced him as a heretic. But the master remained unmoved and constantly improved his speech. Now he is gradually known by people and worthy gentry come forth to help him."[24]

Zhixu 智旭 (1599-1655), one of the four great masters, made a similar comment, "The Tiantai school has discontinued for a long time. Baisong [Zhen]jue has been called a lonely phoenix singing loudly."[25] Chuandeng also gave an account of Tiantai's decline during the mid-Ming:

> "After Siming Fazhi 四明法智 (Zhili) had revived [Tiantai], this teaching was widespread throughout country. … From the late-Song to the Yuan and up to the Yongle era of the Ming, there were those who continued to disseminate the Tiantai teaching but [their continuation was tenuous,] just like a thin piece of string. Since the regimes of Hongzhi 弘治 (1488-1505) and Zhengde 正德 (1506-1521) and onward, this teaching had not been heard. Buddhists, not only of this [Tiantai] mountain but also throughout the country, all said, '[We] have no idea who is engaged in Tiantai teaching.' Has this teaching become too esoteric to understand?

---

[24] See Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎, "Youmen song lue jie xu" 有門頌略解序 (Preface to the Commentary on the Verses of Existence), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 192-93.

[25] Zhixu, "Ru shi zong chuan qie yi" 儒釋宗傳竊議 (Personal Opinions on the Essential Transmission of Confucianism and Buddhism), *Ouyi da shi quan ji* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36:347c.

Or, have humans become so hard-hearted that they enjoy being antagonistic to it?"[26]

Tiantai teaching gradually came back to life because of Baisong's efforts in spreading the nature-inclusion idea. As Feng suggested, Baisong was at first considered to be out of the mainstream and he was ridiculed for teaching this theory. Eventually, Baisong became known for his great eloquence and profound lectures.[27] He lectured mostly on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, the *Lotus Sutra*, and on Zhili's *Miaozong chao* 妙宗鈔. He often attracted a large audience of more than one thousand.[28] Many of them were scholars and officials such as Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙 (1553-1621) and Feng Mengzhen. Feng claimed that his belief in Tiantai was inspired by Baisong.[29] Another lay disciple and famous scholar, Tu Long 屠隆 (1543-1605), said, "The master Miaofeng Baisong, with his high intelligence, was awakened to the *Miaozong chao*. He inherited the essential teaching of Tiantai and gave life to it. His disciple, Wujin [Chuan]deng, with his accumulated wisdom, expounds and glorifies it."[30] Baisong's contribution to Tiantai was also praised with a memorial poem by another one of the four great masters, Zhenke 真可.[31] Baisong was important to Ming Tiantai Buddhism and to Chuandeng's views on Tiantai. Thus, Chuandeng regarded Baisong as the 18th patriarch of the Tiantai lineage

---

26 Chuandeng, "Zuoxi zhizhao fashi" 左溪志昭法師 (Chan Master Zuoxi Zhizhao), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 87.

27 See Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎, "Ming miaofeng jue fashi ta ming" 明妙峰覺法師塔銘 (Stupa Inscription for Master Miaofeng Jue of the Ming), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 233.

28 Ibid., 234.

29 Ibid., 233.

30 See Tu Long 屠隆, "Jian Tiantai zuting ji" 建天台祖庭記, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 132.

31 Zhenke, "Diao Miaofeng Jue jiang zhu" 弔妙峰覺講主 (A Condolence for Teaching Master Miaofen Jue), *Zibo zun zhe quan ji* 紫柏尊者全集 (*The Anthology of Zibo Venerable*), X73: 374a.

and a direct successor of Zhili.[32]

The Revival of Gaoming Monastery

In 1586, three years before Baisong's death, Chuandeng moved to the Gaoming Monastery in the town of Youxi at Tiantai Mountain where he started his task of reviving the Tiantai school. The monastery was his home for the rest of his life. In scale, Gaoming is the second largest monastery among the twelve monasteries built by the Tiantai founder Zhiyi. The largest is Guoqing Monastery (*Guoqing si* 國清寺). There is a legend about why Zhiyi built the Gaoming. Once, as Zhiyi was lecturing on the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Jingming jing* 淨名經) in Folong 佛隴, a leaf from the sutra was carried by the wind a few miles away to Youxi. Zhiyi followed the leaf and saw the green hills and clear waters of Youxi. He thus built a pure abode there. The abode was expanded during the Tang and named Gaoming Monastery (*Gaoming si* 高明寺) because it was built along Mt. Gaoming. During the Five Dynasties, its name changed to Youxi Bodhimandala of Zhiyi (*Zhizhe youxi daochang* 智者幽溪道場). In the Song, it was renamed once more as Vimalakīrti or Jingming Monastery (*Jingming si* 淨名寺) and later changed back to Gaoming Monastery.[33] According to Chuandeng, Gaoming was still flourishing at the beginning of the Jiajing reign (1521-1567), but by the mid-reign it was abandoned. Monks felt it was too difficult to climb over Gold Land Peak (*jindi ling* 金地嶺) to live in a remote ravine. All the monks moved to the Guoqing Monastery at the foot of Tiantai

---

[32] Chuandeng, "Shi ba zu Baisong zun zhe" 十八祖百松尊者 (The Eighteen Patriarch Baisong), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 198-99.

[33] Chuandeng, "Gaoming shi" 高明寺 (Gaoming Monastery), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 42-43.

Mountain, and Gaoming's property rights passed over to Guoqing as well.[34]

Chuandeng first visited the site with Baisong in 1580. Looking at the unusual secluded ravine, the thought of buying this place came to his mind.[35] He went back alone six years later for a visit and consequently decided to live there for the rest of his life. Feng Mengzhen was the monastery's main patron and, along with other scholar-officials such as Lin Chengzhou 林澄洲, Wang Shixing 王士性, and Lu Guangzu 陸光祖 helped to buy back Gaoming Monastery.[36] With only three thatched huts left on the property, he started out to live a life of simplicity.[37] During the first ten years at Gaoming he had no intention of rebuilding the monastery, but only wanted to buy back the lands that once were part of it. His efforts were focused on studying scriptures, meditation retreats, and giving lectures. As his lectures grew in popularity, so did the donations he received. With each donation, he immediately bought back the lands that once belonged to Gaoming but were in the hands of private individuals. In fact, according to Chuandeng, "Inch by inch and pebble by pebble the soil has been bought back, [the result has been] piles and piles of boxes with exchange documents in them."[38]

It was not until 1596, when Chuandeng was forty-three years old, that he began to reconstruct the Main Hall. When Feng first sponsored Chuandeng, he hoped that Chuandeng could rebuild the monastery to spread Tiantai teaching. However, Chuandeng

---

[34] Chuandeng, "Youxi daochang chong xing kao di si" 幽溪道場重興考第四 (Chapter 4 Observations on the Rebuilding of Youxi Truth-site), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 82-83.

[35] Ibid., 84.

[36] Chuandeng, "Chong jian fo dian shu" 重建佛殿疏 (Essay On The Rebuilding of Main Hall), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 92-93. See also Jiang Yuming's "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 447.

[37] Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 448.

[38] Chuandeng, "Youxi daochang chong xing kao di si" 幽溪道場重興考第四, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 85.

did not think he was suitable for the job, and insisted on living a simple life.[39] But one day he suddenly realized that "living a life of isolation is lofty, but if Buddhism is not strong, how then, can I (this school) be strong?"[40] Thus, he started to rebuild the monastery for the sake of spreading the doctrine of Tiantai. As he said, "It is sad that the light of nature-inclusion is disappearing. Without a home, how can it be spread?"[41] He started by building the Main Hall, and then a monastic dormitory, the Meditation Hall, the Never-blinking Hall (*bushun tang* 不瞬堂), the Śūraṃgama Altar (*lengyan tan* 楞嚴壇), the front gate, two wings for a main hall, a bell tower, a scripture depositary and so on. The rebuilding of the monastery lasted for the rest of Chuandeng's life. In his old age he recalled,

> "Funds were hard to raise in the ravine and they came from the donations I received from the lectures I gave. When I received an inch-worth of donations, I would build an inch. When I received a foot-worth of donations, I would build a foot. This is why it has taken so long, lasting thirty-two years up to the present. It has taken all my strength to take charge of this construction."[42]

According to the *Youxi Gazetteer*, Chuandeng had a specific purpose in mind when he constructed each building. Several gazetteer articles show the difficulties he and his followers encountered in the ravine. In one article, Chuandeng noted that patrons, big logs, and rice were the three most inconvenient items to get to the ravine.[43] Nonetheless, with his perseverance, miracles, and the help of many others, a large monastery was reconstructed.

---

[39] Chuandeng, "Youxi daochang chong xing kao di si" 重建佛殿疏, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 93.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Chuandeng, "Youxi daochang chong xing kao di si" 幽溪道場重興考第四, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 82.

[42] Ibid., 85-86.

[43] Chuandeng, "Youxi daochang gui zhi kao di wu" 幽溪道場規制考第五 (Chapter 5 Observations on the Layout Rules of Youxi Truth-site), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 102.

In his essay, "Main Hall" (*dadian* 大殿), Chuandeng had his own ideas about the imagery to be used for the hall. He thought that the images should differ from other schools since the monastery was the spiritual homeland of the Tiantai tradition. Based on the *Lotus Sutra*, he set the image of Śākyamuni Buddha in the middle with Maitreya Bodhisattva to its right and Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva to its left. He was inspired by a scene in the sutra that presents Śākyamuni Buddha in deep meditation emitting rays while Mañjuśrī answers Maitreya's question about the cause of this auspicious event.[44]

In "Notes on the Merits for Casting the Iron Buddha Images for the Youxi Bodhimandala" (*youxi daochang tiefo gongde ji* 幽溪道場鐵佛功德紀), the three images for the Main Hall were forged out of iron from Hangzhou 杭州 which weighed 17000 catties (*jin* 斤). This took nine years to make with no money left to pay for their transportation. Chuandeng had to use the donations from his lectures in Hangzhou to hire a ship. He recorded the three ordeals the images encountered on the way to Gaoming. First, they met with huge waves at Biezimen 鱉子門. The images were tilted half-way off the ship and the crew wanted to push the images completely off to save their lives. Chuangdeng's disciple Zhengji Benmiao 正跡本妙 (n.d.) cried out, "Better to sacrifice the ship and its crew than to push off the images." The sea immediately became calm, and everyone on the ship was grateful for the supernatural power the images had displayed and tilted the images back to the upright position.

The second ordeal they met was shallow waters at Linhai 臨海 because of a drought. The ship's hull was too large and was stuck for one month. The local people's

---

[44] Chuandeng, "Dadian" 大殿 (Main Hall), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 107.

prayers failed to produce rain and instead they started to blame the images. Residents went to the governor to insist that it was urgent to sink the images in order to save the people. At a critical moment, the governor made a surprising decision, "Praying to the images will lead to rain, not stop rain. If you don't believe this, I will send them away on a boat." Consequently, the images arrived safely in Qingxi 清溪 ten days later.

During the last ordeal, the images encountered the steep paths between Qingxi and Gaoming Monastery, although the distance was only about 20 *li* (里, a traditional Chinese unit of distance). When the procession passed by Guoqing Monastery, everyone there was surprised and considered the endeavor very foolish. This was because they knew that it was not easy for a normal sized statue to go through the cliffs at Longtan 龍潭, let alone one hundred people lifting images that were more than ten thousand catties. Should anyone slip, both people and images would be lost. Questions arose as to who should keep the images, Gaoming or Guoqing. As expected, the paths at Longtan were merely as wide as the images. However, no one carrying the images was afraid. They invoked the name of the Buddha continuously and passed the cliff in a short time, moving along with one foot in the air and the other on the path. Chuandeng believed that this task would have been impossible if it were not for the help of the images' supernatural powers.[45] He recorded many miracles like these during the reconstruction and recorded them in the *Youxi Gazetteer*.[46]

The two most distinctive buildings of Chuandeng's project were the Never-Blinking Hall 不瞬堂 and the Śūraṃgama Altar 楞嚴壇. The Never-Blinking Hall was

---

[45] Chuandeng, "Youxi daochang tiefo gongde ji" 幽溪道場鐵佛功德紀 (Notes on the Merits for the Iron Buddha Images for the Youxi Bodhimandala), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 151-55.

[46] See, for example, Chuandeng's *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 83-84, 74-76, 630-32.

completed in 1607, enshrining there the images of "the Three Sages of the West," Amitābha Buddha in the center with Guanyin to his left and Dashizhi 大勢至 (Skt.: Mahāsthāmaprāpta) to his right. Although the purpose of the hall was for Pure Land practice, Chuandeng gave three reasons for the hall's name in his essay, "Notes on Never-Blinking Hall" (*Bushun tang ji* 不瞬堂記). First, never-blinking means that the mind, like the hall, is always bright, for the hall is always illuminated by the sun in the daytime, by the moon at night, and by the lamp when both cannot reach. Second, Guanyin's name was "Prince Never-blinking" in one of his lives before attaining Buddhahood. The prince's mind was constantly unmoved in deep concentration and his eyes never blinked. Third and most important, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, which advocates Guanyin's practice, is connected to the idea of never-blinking. In Chuandeng's words,

> "The essential teaching I rely on is the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. [The sutra says,] 'Based on the true nature of hearing, first Guanyin redirected the hearing inward, and the external object of hearing then disappeared. With both the inward hearing and the external objects of hearing stilled, the two forms of sound and silence ceased to arise.' At that moment this mind is unmoved, so the eyes do not blink."[47]

Chuandeng was sixty-two (1615) years old upon the completion of the Śūraṃgama Altar, the most significant construction of his rebuilding project. Remaining consistent with his focus on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, the building's primary purpose was for the method Guanyin used to reach enlightenment as described above. The method is known as the "interpenetration by means of ear-organ" (*ergen yuantong* 耳根圓通) which leads to the Great Concentration known as the "Śūraṃgama Ocean Seal Samādhi" (*lengyan haiyin sanmei* 楞嚴海印三昧). Although Chuandeng often performed Tiantai practices such as the Lotus Samādhi Repentance Ritual (*fahua sanmei chanfa* 法華三昧懺法) and

---

[47] Chuandeng, "Bushun tang ji" 不瞬堂記 (Notes on Never-Blinking Hall), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 147-48.

the Great Compassion Samādhi Repentance Ritual (*dabei sanmei chanfa* 大悲三昧懺法), he set the ear-organ method as his life-long practice when he had his initial enlightenment. After decades of practice, at the age of fifty-seven, he made a vow to build the Śūraṃgama Altar upon the completion of the Meditation Hall. One day, when he was practicing this method in the Meditation Hall, he thought to himself, "If at some moment during my life I deeply resonate (*xiang ying* 相應) with this practice (ear-organ method), I will make every effort to raise funds to build a Śūraṃgama altar and gather people to practice." At fifty-nine he reached this resonating place. Three years later the altar was completed and he immediately began to hold one-hundred-day Śūraṃgama Samādhi retreats at the altar thereafter every year until his death.[48]

There was a stele entitled "The Inscription for the Altar and Ritual of Śūraṃgama Ocean Seal Samādhi" (*Lengyan haiyin sanmei tan yi bei* 楞嚴海印三昧壇儀碑) that stood in front of the building. Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙 was the author of the inscription. The handwriting was by Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) and engraved on the stele by Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558-1639). Both Dong and Chen were famous calligraphists at the time, and the stele was honored as a "three wonders" (*san jue* 三絕) by contemporaries.[49] The inscription records Chuandeng as the first to build a Śūraṃgama altar in either India or China. As it says, "The form of the Śūraṃgama Altar in this world was started by master Wujin [Chuan]deng. The Bodhimandala (Place of Enlightenment) of Śūraṃgama in this world begins at Mt. Taintai."[50] The Śūraṃgama Repentance Ritual

---

[48] Chuandeng, "Lengyan tan" 楞嚴檀 (Śūraṃgama Altar), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 104-5.

[49] Zhu, *Gaoming si zhi* 高明寺志, 47.

[50] See Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙, "*Lengyan haiyin sanmei tan yi bei*" 楞嚴海印三昧壇儀碑 (The Inscription for the

was created by Renyue Jingjue 仁岳淨覺 (992～1064) during the Song[51], and Chuandeng was the first to build a Śūraṃgama Altar following the description in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.

The inscription on the stele further says that Chuandeng wrote four articles in his *Ritual Manual of Śūraṃgama Ocean Seal Samādhi* (*Lengyan haiyin sanmei yi* 楞嚴海印三昧儀) about the Altar and corresponding ritual. One is still in existence, "The Symbolic Meaning of the Śūraṃgama Altar" (*Lengyan tan biaofa* 楞嚴壇表法). "The Repentance Ritual" (*Chan fa* 懺法), "The Precepts Ritual" (*Jie fa* 戒法), and "The Meditation Ritual" (*Chan fa* 禪法) have all been lost.[52] "The Symbolic Meaning" describes in detail the meaning of each element of the Altar; and the way the elements were set up are as follows:[53] in the center of the hall is an octagonal platform made from yellow soil retrieved from five feet underneath a high plateau. The platform is covered with a plaster made from the finest powder of yellow soil mixed with ten fragrances. Yellow soil represents the mind and the ten fragrances represent the ten precepts. A large lotus flower is set in the middle and inside it a monastic bowl. In the bowl is dew collected in August. The lotus, bowl, and dew represent the great universal wisdom the Buddha uses to teach sentient beings. The lotus on the platform is surrounded by eight round mirrors, and above it hangs a great snow-white umbrella with eight mirrors

---

Altar and Ritual of Śūraṃgama Ocean Seal Samādhi), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 129-30. See also Chuandeng's "Lengyan tan" 楞嚴檀, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 103.

[51] See Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙, "*Lengyan haiyin sanmei tan yi bei*" 楞嚴海印三昧壇儀碑, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 127.

[52] Ibid., 128.

[53] Chuandeng, "Lengyan tan biaofa" 楞嚴壇表法 (The Symbolic Meaning of the Śūraṃgama Altar), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 118-26. It is also collected in his *Lengyan jing yuantong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏, X12: 859c-861b.

dangling exactly above the eight mirrors on the platform below. In the center of the umbrella hangs a large round mirror that together with the upper eight mirrors represent the Buddha's responses and manifestations to sentient beings. The lower eight mirrors on the platform represent sentient beings receiving Buddha's answers. The number "eight" represents the Eightfold Path,[54] leading to Buddhahood. The unity of the Buddha and sentient beings is based on the three learnings—precepts, concentration, and wisdom—that are represented by the fragrances of the precepts, the mirror of concentration, and the flower of wisdom. The sixteen mirrors are the wonderful nature of interpenetration when the practice is completely fulfilled. The interpenetration of the light of the upper and lower mirrors indicates the two powers demonstrated by Guanyin in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*:

> "First, my mind merged with the fundamental, wondrous, enlightened mind of all Buddhas in the ten directions above, and my power of compassion became the same as theirs. Second, my mind merged with all beings of the six destinies in the ten directions below such that I felt their sorrows and their prayerful yearnings as my own."[55]

Chuandeng's overarching goal for rebuilding the monastery was to establish the Three Treasures—the Buddha, the Dharma (the Buddhist teachings), and the Sangha (the Buddhist order) on Mt Tiantai. By the time he was fifty-nine, the same year he built the Śūraṃgama Altar, he felt he had completed the establishment of two of the three treasures: that of the Buddha with the casting of images, and that of the Sangha with the completion of the meditation halls. At this juncture, Gaoming Monastery was considered

---

[54] The eight types of Buddhist practice which can lead sentient beings to liberation. They are right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

[55] *Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經, T19: 128b.

to be a great Buddhist center and many monks practiced there.[56] All that was missing was the Dharma Treasure and he hoped to attain a copy of the Chinese Buddhist Canon in order to complete his goal. Because most Chinese copies were subject to harm by bookworms, he wished to print a copy using Song era technology which he believed to be the best. Recurring lack of funds limited his access to these technologies yet his creativity was not stunted, and he came up with an innovative way to inexpensively print them, thereby, to best protect his new copies of the Dharma:

> "It should be printed on bamboo paper, wrapped in rattan paper, dyed with Huangbo 黃蘗 herbs, mounted with Fajiang 法糨 paste, covered with Zhike 緻殼 shell and passed over a flaming fire. Bamboo paper is selected for its solid and smooth qualities. Rattan paper does not crack. Huangbo herb has a bitter flavor, thus prevents it from being eaten by bookworms. Fajiang paste is strong. The weight of Zhike shell is suitable. Skim over the flaming fire is to symbolically prevent [the cannon from] burning. This is how to combine the old way [of the Song] with my own idea."[57]

Unfortunately this copy of the canon no longer exists.

Activities to Revive Tiantai

The Gaoming Monastery became the base from which Chuandeng revitalized Tiantai Buddhism. Chuandeng was very active in spreading Tiantai Buddhism. He gave lectures, held repentance rituals and wrote many books. As Gaoming began to take shape, Chuangdeng started to give lectures more frequently. His lectures were not only the main financial resources of the rebuilding project but also the key to reviving the Tiantai teaching. He gave a total of seventy lecture sessions in his lifetime. Each session typically

---

[56] See Li Lin 李麟, "Wei youxi qing zang yu wu wenxue shu" 為幽溪請藏與吳文學書 (A Letter to Wu Wenxu Requesting a Copy of Canon for Youxi), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 379.

[57] Chuandeng, "Mu zao cang jing shu" 募造藏經疏 (Essay On Raising Funds for Canon), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 144-45.

lasted two months or an entire summer and consisted of a different scriptural topic each time.[58] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was the most frequently discussed topic, sixteen sessions in total. He also lectured on the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Miaozong chao* seven times each. Other lecture topics included Zhiyi's *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* (*Fahua xuanyi* 法華玄義) and *The Great Concentration and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhi guan* 摩訶止觀), and his own works, *The Profound Meaning of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and *The Commentary on the Interpenetration of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan jing yuantong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏).[59] Clearly, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was at the core of his teaching.

Aside from teaching at Gaoming, he was frequently invited to lecture by different groups, such as monasteries, literati associations and government officials. Forty-one years passed from his first lecture on the *Lotus Sutra* at the Ayuwang Monastery (*Ayuwang si* 阿育王寺) in Ningpo to the last lecture on *Miaozong chao* at the Yanqing Monastery (*Yanqing si* 延慶寺) in Ningpo, and during that time he visited more than ten prefectures. At seventy-two, he stopped traveling and remained in Gaoming until his death. As Chuandeng recalled:

> "During forty-one years, I came and went between these places:Taizhou, Wenzhou, Ningbo, Shaoxing, Jinhua, Chuzhou, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Jiaxing and Huzhou (all are in present-day Zhejiang province). I gave important lectures each year and there was no vacant seat left every year. [I met] eminent monks and well-known individuals. [I encountered] fine gentlemen and graceful guests in all places, and received letters of invitation."[60]

Chuandeng's persuasive manner and eloquence in expounding the unique Tiantai

---

[58] For example, Chuandeng gave lectures on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* for two months of 1595 and on the *Lotus Sutra* for the entire summer of 1614. See his *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 104, 544.

[59] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 450.

[60] Chuandeng, "Youxi daochang zeng wei kao di wu" 幽溪道場贈遺考第五 (Chapter 5 Observations on Written Words Given to Youxi Truth-site), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 542-43.

teaching and his charismatic presence attracted a great many prominent monks, the intellectual elite, government officials, and the laity alike. In 1595, he was invited to the Haihui Monastery (*Haihui si* 海會寺) in Siming to lecture over a two month period on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. Tu Long 屠龍 described the monumental event thus:

> "Master Miaofeng's brilliant disciple Wujin (Chuandeng) inherited the Dharma from Miaofeng. Wujin's wisdom is outstanding. He goes deep into the supreme meaning. He is comparable to his teacher's excellence and even surpasses him. … At that time, those officials who attended the lecture were the imperial historian Yang Shuxiang Dezheng, the deputy minister Zhang Rujue Bangyi and the imperial censor Xu Ziting Jinxing. The lay followers were Shen Jiaze Mingchen, Wen Zhonglian Jilong, Zhang Ruyuan Bangtong, [Zhang] Ruzong Bangdai, [Zhang] Gonglu Ziyu, [Zhang] Yinzhong Zixu, [Zhang] Yongnian Yingsong, Li Cigong Lin, [Li] Cide Ji, Yang Yishao Deqi, Shen Shian Yunchong, [Shen] Youxiong Taihong. … Well-known monks from Siming were Fayun Jiu, Daoyuan Lun, Xinru Xi, Dache Ming, Dafang Guang, Wantong Zhe, Langchu Hui, Sikong Pei, Xiuyuan Fu, Xilai Yin. … Both masters Qianru 千如 and Zhong'an 沖庵, just as Chuandeng, are regarded as mentors and give many lectures. It is especially rare that they both (Qianru, Zhong'an), as leading authorities [in Buddhism], comported themselves as his disciples and bowed their heads in submission to his teaching. At the time, the people came together in crowds and in the number of hundreds and thousands. I was unable to list all who attended."[61]

Scholar Wen Long 聞龍 (1551-1631) remarked that he was deeply inspired by the same lecture. The notes he took indicate that Chuandeng's lecture combined the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* with nature-inclusion thought. He wrote:

> "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is the best Mahāyāna teaching, the ultimate teaching. … If one realizes this principle [of the sutra], the nature of tathāgatagarbha can be discovered. If one invokes this wisdom, the Śūraṃgama Great Concentration can be attained. If one cuts off this ignorance, the Dharma-gate of nature-inclusion can be revealed."[62]

Wen and many others insisted that Chuandeng was a bodhisattva in the flesh, as predicted

---

[61] See Tu Long 屠龍, "Siming Haiwui si jiang lengyan jing ji" 四明海會寺講楞嚴經記 (Notes on the Lectures on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* at Haihui Monastery in Siming), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 544-46.

[62] See Wen Long 聞龍, "Siming Haiwui si jiang lengyan jing ji" 四明海會寺講楞嚴經解期歸天台序 (Notes on the Completion of the Lectures on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* at Haihui Monastery in Siming), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 549.

by the Tiantai founder Zhiyi in a legend,[63] who would come hundreds of years after Zhiyi's death and use Tiantai doctrine to explain the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.[64]

A miracle during another lecture further increased his reputation. In 1604, he wrote the treatise *On the Rebirth as Non-birth in the Pure Land* (*Jingtu sheng wusheng lun* 淨土生無生論) in response to a request from his lay disciple Wen Long.[65] In this treatise Chuandeng first proposed the framework of his own nature-inclusion thought and further expanded this in his later work, *On Nature Including Good and Evil*.[66] That same year, he lectured on the treatise for a few months at the Dafo Monastery (*Dafo si* 大佛寺, in present-day Xinchang 新昌). The audience was counted in the tens of thousands.[67] Zhengji 正寂 (n.d.), a disciple of Chuandeng, wrote in his "Eulogy on Heavenly Music," "whenever [Chuandeng] started his speech, music arose from the sky unceasingly. It happened everyday and lasted for half a month. The Buddhist audience all said that they never heard of or saw [something like] this. I witnessed it in person at the great event."[68] This was apparently what Chuandeng himself thought also. He described

---

[63] The legend is recorded in Zhipan's *Fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀, X49: 205a. It says, "The *Linjian Lu* says that Tiantai (the founder Zhiyi) heard that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is in the West (India), but the emperor hid it secretly and did not want to disseminate it. Tiantai often prostrated to it distantly hoping that the sutra will come to this land soon. Also the *Qingliang* says that 'I (Zhiyi) will not see this sutra and there will be a prime minister bodhisattva who translates the words of the Buddha, and hundreds of years after there will be a monk [as a bodhisattva] in the flesh who uses my teaching (the Tiantai doctrine) to explain the sutra.'"

[64] Ibid, p.550. See also Wang Shichang's "Shou seng deng qi zhi xu" 壽僧燈七秩序 (Essay Celebrating Master Chuandeng's 70th Anniversary), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 562.

[65] Zhenming 真銘, "*Ba yu*" 跋語 (Postscript) in Shoujiao's 受教 *Jingtu sheng wusheng lun qin wen ji* 淨土生無生論親聞記 (*Commentary On the Rebirth as Non-birth in the Pure Land*), X61: 871.

[66] Lin, "The Study on the Master Youxi Chuandeng (1554-1628) in the Ming Dynasty," 62. *Jingtu sheng wusheng lun* 淨土生無生論 is collected in T47. no.1975.

[67] Chuandeng, "Ming shicheng Sou'an dashi chuan" 明石城守庵大師傳 (Biography of Sou'an from Shicheng of the Ming), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 238.

[68] Zhengji 正寂, "Tianyue fu" 天樂賦 (Eulogy on Heavenly Music), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 569.

his experience thus: "The heavenly music seemed to be not of this world. Monks and lay followers flocked to the scene. The Confucian gentry were all surprised by it. In the beginning, [I] thought it an illusion. After keeping my mind on it, my doubt was gone."[69] Essays and poems praising the heavenly music and the lecture were written by many witnesses, including scholars and officials, and have been collected in the *Youxi Gazetteer*. In these articles, Chuandeng was honored with titles such as "the foremost monk of Tiantai" (*Tiantai di yi seng* 天台第一僧) and "the master of Tiantai teaching" (*Tiantai jiao zhu* 天台教主).[70]

Chuandeng's practice was an integral part of his efforts to revive Tiantai in the late Ming. Chuandeng continued his practice even while engaged in many projects. Before building the Śūraṃgama Altar, Chuandeng often performed various Tiantai repentance rituals such as the Lotus Samādhi Repentance Ritual and the Great Compassion Samādhi Repentance Ritual. According to an inscription by Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, a scholar-official follower of Chuandneg, Chuandeng was frequently invited by other monasteries and laypersons to hold sessions of the Lotus Samādhi Repentance Ritual and the Great Compassion Samādhi Repentance Ritual. For example, he, together with Jieshan Chuanru 介山傳如 (1562-1624) who was also a disciple of Baisong, practiced the Lotus Samādhi for half a year.[71] He was invited by Feng Mengzhen and Yu Chunxi to hold three sessions of the Lotus Samādhi at the Shengguo Monastery (*Shengguo si* 勝

---

[69] Chuandeng, "Ming Shicheng Sou'an dashi chuan" 明石城守庵大師傳 (Biography of Sou'an from Shicheng of the Ming), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 238.

[70] See Chen Zhaofu's 陳朝輔 "Tianyue fu" 天樂賦 (Eulogy on Heavenly Music) and Qiao Shiyin's 喬時英 "Tianyue fu" 天樂賦 (Eulogy on Heavenly Music), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 581-2.

[71] See Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙, "Lengyan xuanyi xu " 楞嚴玄義序 (Preface to the Profound Meaning of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 471.

果寺) in Hangzhou for three consecutive years.[72] During each session he lectured on the *Lotus Sutra*.[73] In Feng's eyes, the practice of Lotus Samādhi is the king of all repentance rituals and he praised Chuandeng as the best celebrant for the Lotus Samādhi practice.[74]

Once the Śūraṃgama Altar was built, Chuandeng focused his practice primarily on the Śūraṃgama Samādhi using the method of "the interpenetration by means of ear-organ." Ten monks would perform the repentance ritual and meditate in an open space before the altar, while other participants were not allowed to enter.[75] According to the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, strict observance of the precepts is a prerequisite for this ritual. Every year Chuandeng would lead ten monks who kept strict precepts and together they would hold a one-hundred-day session. In preparation, twenty-one days were dedicated to repentance rituals, prostrations, recitation of the Śūraṃgama mantra, walking meditation, and making vows. This would then be followed by a one-hundred-day meditation retreat. Wang Shichang 王士昌, a scholar-official recorded their practice in a dedication essay for Chuandeng's seventieth birthday:

> "He supervised ten people to enter the Altar together. During twenty-one days he practiced the walking meditation for the six periods of day and night without sleep. Afterwards, he meditated wholeheartedly until the end of the one hundredth day. He never cancelled since the year of Yi-mao (1615). He thus set up the model of both building the Altar and performed the ritual for all ages in this country. He is an example to the monks of the next one hundred generations."[76]

---

[72] See Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎, "Qing xiu fahua san mei shu" 請修法華三昧書 (Formal Request to hold the Lotus Samādhi Ritual), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 175.

[73] See Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙, "Shengguo si chan bi fahua jiang che zhan song gui tiantai san jue " 聖果寺懺畢法華講撤暫送歸天台三絕 (The Completion of the Lotus Ritual and the Lecture on the Lotus Sutra), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 586.

[74] See Feng Mengzhen馮夢禎, "Qing xiu fahua san mei shu" 請修法華三昧書 (Formal Request to hold the Lotus Samādhi Ritual), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 175.

[75] Chuandeng, "Lengyan tan" 楞嚴檀, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 106.

[76] See Wang Shichang 王士昌, "Shou seng deng qi zhi xu" 壽僧燈七秩序 (Essay Celebrating Master Chuandeng's 70th Anniversary), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 563-4.

Chuandeng often went to meditate at a nearby cave which he named the "Interpenetration Cave" (*yuantong dong* 圓通洞). By listening to the sounds of streams and pine trees and contemplating the nature of hearing, he practiced the method of "the interpenetration by means of ear-organ" and was further awakened. He recorded his insight in poems. In "Interpenetration Cave" he writes that he experienced "the state of the interpenetration by means of ear-organ manifesting all the time."[77] In the poem "White Flower Hut," he says that he was "awakened to the nature of interpenetration."[78] Based on his insight on interpenetration, Chuandeng wrote *The Commentary on the Interpenetration of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.

Chuandeng strictly observed the precepts all his life. At Baisong's suggestion, he retook all the precepts from master Shouan Xingzhuan 守庵性專 (1534-1606), who was considered by his contemporaries to be one of the very few monks who had mastered strict adherence to the precepts.[79] As part of a months-long ritual, Chuandeng fasted after the noon meal and meditated at night without lying down.[80] In his lectures, Chuandeng often admonished monks and the laity to observe precepts.[81] Chuandeng would be praised not only for his teachings but also for his rigorous adherence to the precepts. His contemporaries praised him as "an eminent monk of observing precepts" (*jiexing gaoseng* 戒行高僧) and "the eminent monk with the virtue of keeping precepts" (*jiede*

---

[77] Chuandeng, "Yuantong dong" 圓通洞 (Interpenetration Cave), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 226.

[78] Chuandeng, "Bai hua an" 白花菴 (White Flower Hut), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 244.

[79] Chuandeng, "Ming shicheng Sou'an dashi chuan" 明石城守庵大師傳 (Biography of Sou'an from Shicheng of the Ming), *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 238-9.

[80] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 447.

[81] Ibid., 451.

gaoseng 戒德高僧).[82]

Since the construction of the Śūraṃgama Altar, it was this spirit of diligent cultivation in the monastery that constantly attracted many visitors, monks, and laity alike to Chuandeng. As Jiang Yuming described "…the bodhisattvas [in the monastery] had been in great numbers and famous monks came one after the other."[83] Gaoming Monastery was honored as "the preeminent monastery south of the Yangtze river" (*jiangnan deyi mingcha* 江南第一名剎)[84] representing the Tianati school.

Chuandeng devoted himself to writing once the Śūraṃgama Altar was finished and he published almost every year. This output of publications can be attributed to the insight Chuandeng may have attained from the practice of "the interpenetration by means of ear-organ." He wrote more than twenty works[85] ranging from commentaries and treatises to ritual manuals and gazetteers. As a Tiantai monk, his understanding of Buddhist teaching and practice relied heavily on the doctrine of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. His four works related to this sutra were honored by contemporaries as the "Four Books of Śūraṃgama" (*Lengyan si shu* 楞嚴四書). They are: *The Profound Meaning of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, *A Pre-Commentary on the Interpenetration of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan jing yuantong shu qianmao* 楞嚴經圓通疏前茅), the *Commentary on the*

---

[82] See Lin Guocai's 林國材 "Yu tiantai xian zhang yi hou shu" 與天台縣張邑侯書 (Letter to the Chief Magistrate Zhang Yihou of Tiantai County) and Guo Zhongning 郭忠寧's "Wei youxi jiang jing yutan yu wenzhou shi tai zun shu" 為幽溪講經魚潭與溫州施太尊書 (Letter to Governor Shi of Wenzhou Announcing a Lecture at Yutan), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 346, 394.

[83] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 449.

[84] See Chen Chaofu 陳朝輔, "Zeng seng deng qi shi shou xu" 贈僧燈七十壽序 (Bestowing Essay for Master Chuandeng on his 70th Anniversary), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 568.

[85] Shoujiao 受教, "Youxi daochang zhushu kao di shi si" 幽溪道場著述考第十四(Chapter 14 Observations on the Publications of Youxi Truth-site), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 464-66.

Interpenetration of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra, and the *Ritual Manual of Śūraṃgama Ocean Seal Samādhi* (*Lengyan haiyin sanmei yi* 楞嚴海印三昧儀).[86] The *Profound Meaning* is his interpretation of the sutra's title. The *Commentary* is his interpretation of the content of the sutra. The *Pre-Commentary* is a polemical apology for the scripture. The *Ritual Manual* describes the practice of the Śūraṃgama Samādhi. In these texts, he interpreted the ideas of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* through the Tiantai nature-inclusion teaching on the one hand and used the ideas of the sutra to reinterpret Tiantai nature-inclusion teaching on the other hand. This feature is seen clearly in the treatise *On Nature Including Good and Evil*, the representative work of his Tiantai thinking about nature-inclusion.

Nature-inclusion is ubiquitous in most of his works such as *On Interpenetration Mind in the Diamond Sutra* (*Bore Rongxin Lun* 般若融心論) and the *Commentary on the No-Self in the Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Weimojie jing wuwo shu* 維摩詰經無我疏). Aside from advocating Tiantai thought, he also sought to harmonize Tiantai with Chan and Pure Land teachings. His *Commentary on the Record of Tiantai's Transmission of the Buddha's Mind-seal* (*Tiantai chuan fo xinyin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註) is a commentary on Huaize's (fl.1310) work and his attempt to harmonize Tiantai and Chan. Huaize's work legitimized the teaching of nature-inclusion as the mind-seal of the Buddha. In another work, the *Commentary on Anthology of the Chan school of Yongjia*, he used the Tiantai view to explain Chan teaching. *On Being Born and Unborn in Pure Land* shows his application of nature-inclusion thought on the doctrine and practice of Pure Land teaching thus proving the consistency between Tiantai and Pure Land. The *Śūraṃgama*

[86] See Wang Shichang 王士昌, "Shou seng deng qi zhi xu" 壽僧燈七秩序 (Essay Celebrating Master Chuandeng's 70th Anniversary), *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 563.

Sūtra played an important role in supporting his Pure Land theory.

From the age of seventy, Chaundeng performed the Repentance Ritual of Amitābha Buddha (*mituo chanfa* 彌陀懺法), a Pure Land ritual, more frequently. He established a Lotus Society (*lian she* 蓮社) for the recitation of the name of Buddha a year later, and, at the age of seventy-two, he stopped traveling for lectures. Retiring to a private life in the Gaoming Monastery, he dedicated himself to writing. In these later years, he reflected, "The Universe is the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*." In 1628, he gathered his disciples and said, "In person I have realized the Dharma-body. This Dharma-body is exactly the Dharma-body of all the Buddhas. It appears at every moment without raising any thought [in my mind]." On May 21st of the same year, he wrote down and chanted the five Chinese words, "*miao fa lian hua jing*" 妙法蓮華經 (*The Lotus Sūtra*), he sat in the lotus position and passed way. He lived seventy-five years.[87]

[87] See Jiang Yuming 蔣玉鳴, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 449.

Chapter 3 Zhiyi's "Buddha-nature Includes Good and Evil" Thought

Tiantai philosophy was over one thousand years old by the time Chuandeng was born and, as the inheritor to this legacy, Chuandeng put nature-inclusion at the core of his doctrine. Like his predecessors, Chuandeng placed himself at the center of controversy when expounding that "Buddha-nature includes inherent good and inherent evil" strengthening and defining Tiantai by polemical methods. This chapter and the next will discuss the background to nature-inclusion—particularly "Buddha-nature includes good and evil"—and its development up to Chuandeng's time. We will also see the particular methods his predecessors used to expound and develop this unique idea.

Zhiyi's amalgamation of Chinese culture and Buddhism effectively established the first Chinese Buddhist school and set the way forward for Chinese Buddhism. Although Zhiyi focused the newly created doctrine around his original Threefold Truth idea (Emptiness, Provisional, and Middle Way), in later years, his successors (Zhanran, Zhili, Huaize, and Chuandeng) focused on what they considered to be the strongest, most distinct idea to emerge from his philosophy: the enigmatic topic of "Buddha-nature includes good and evil."

Buddha-nature

The ultimate goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism is to help all ordinary sentient beings liberate themselves from suffering and, thus, become Buddhas. However, on what basis and by what method can a sentient being become a Buddha by attaining supreme enlightenment? In answering these questions, Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially Chinese

Buddhism, centers the solution on the subjective mind of sentient beings. The key to attaining ultimate enlightenment is to get rid of the defilement in the mind so that the mind can manifest its purity. This mind of purity in sentient beings is the connection to the mind of purity of the Buddha. The sentient being, the Buddha, and the mind thus form a significant dynamic in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Various Mahāyāna doctrines developed from different interpretations of this dynamic. The Indian concept of *tathāgatagarbha* exerted strong influence on Chinese Buddhism. Under different names, it became known as Buddha-nature.

The tathāgatagarbha[1] doctrine states that the original pure and enlightened mind is inherent in all sentient beings and this is the potential for Buddhahood. This inherent potential, as the nature of Buddha, is undefiled. It is, however, temporarily covered by the afflictions of sentient beings and will not manifest until sentient beings become Buddhas. As Buddhas, tathāgatagarbha is the fully realized Reality or Dharma-body (dharmakāya). Tathāgatagarbha also has the meaning of Reality-nature perceived by Buddhas in all things. As this universally pervading principle, tathāgatagarbha is called Reality or Suchness (tathatā).[2] Later, in the *Mahā-parinirvāna-sūtra*, tathāgatagarbha thought is developed into buddhadhātu (lit.: Dharma-realm or Reality-realm; Chin.: *fa jie* 法界). The sutra claims that all sentient beings possess buddhadhātu and explains buddhadhātu by tathāgatagarbha to affirm both the potentiality of Buddhahood within sentient beings and the future certainty of becoming Buddhas.[3] Chinese Buddhism translated

[1] Tathāgatagarbha is considered either as the "womb" or "embryo" of Buddhahood; as an embryo that would become a Buddha, or as the womb which contains the Buddha-to-be.

[2] King, *Buddha Nature*, 27.

[3] See *Mahā-parinirvāna-sūtra* 大般涅槃經, T12: 407b.

Buddhadhātu as Buddha-nature (*fo xing* 佛性).[4]

After Buddhism came to China, the idea of Emptiness in the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* was the dominant Buddhist thought during the Jin dynasty (265-420). It was primarily expounded by the Mādyamika School, one of the two major Indian Mahāyāna traditions to take root in China as well documented in Erik Zürcher's study.[5] The idea of Buddha-nature was not fully mature yet, but Daosheng 道生 (355-434) set a new direction for Chinese Buddhism by his bold pronouncements. He announced that "all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature" and that "icchantikas (those who have cut off their roots of goodness) will eventually become Buddhas." Daosheng was expelled by the monastic order for violating the existing scriptural teachings in China and it was not until the appearance of the Chinese translation in 421 of the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa- sūtra*[6] that his view received scriptural confirmation.[7] Daosheng uses the universal "principle" (*li* 理), Chinese term, as Emptiness-nature of all things to explain Buddha-nature. For him, although sentient beings are endowed with the principle as Buddha-nature, the difference is that Buddhas realize the principle while sentient beings do not.[8] Most importantly, Daosheng's affirmations shifted Chinese Buddhism's philosophical focus from Emptiness to Buddha-nature.[9]

This major shift in focus resulted in the emergence of many theories about

---

[4] See Shih, "Foxing lun zhi yan jiu" 佛性論之研究, 48.

[5] See Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*.

[6] It was translated by Dharmakṣema (Tan Wuchen 曇無讖).

[7] Huijiao 慧皎, *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳, T50: 366b-c.

[8] Baoliang 寶亮, *Da bo nie pan jing ji jie* 大般涅槃經集解, T37: 464a.

[9] Lai, *Zhongguo foxing lun* 中國佛性論, 108-9.

Buddha-nature. Two distinct competing theories emerged, "original existence (*benyou* 本有)" and "acquired existence (*shiyou* 始有)."[10] The theory of "original existence" proposes that the minds of sentient beings originally possess Buddha-nature. Therefore, the mind is originally pure. The theory of "acquired existence" proposes that sentient beings will acquire Buddha-nature only after purifying their minds because their minds are originally defiled. These two theories further helped the evolution of the idea of Buddha-nature. Influenced by the "storehouse consciousness" (ālaya-vijñāna) doctrine[11] developed by the Yogācāra, the other Indian Mahāyāna school to take root in China, two Chinese sects developed their particular theories on Buddha-nature. While both sects agree that the ālaya-vijñāna is the source of this defiled world, they differ on whether or not it is pure. The Dilun 地論 sect says that the nature of ālaya-vijñāna is the pure mind of tathāgatagarbha. The Shelun 攝論 sect says that the ālaya-vijñāna is defiled. Moreover, it further believes that the tathāgatagarbha is contained within the ālaya-vijñāna but is not defiled by it.[12] What is of interest here is that both insist that all

---

[10] According to Jicang 吉藏 (549-623), there were more than ten theories on it by his time. See his *Dasheng xuan lun* 大乘玄論, T45: 35b-c.

[11] The Yogācāra uses the ālaya-vijñāna doctrine to explain the relationship between sentient beings and Buddhas. It is imagined as a storehouse in which the past experiences are all stored as "seeds" which shape future deeds. There are defiled seeds and undefiled seeds. The defiled seeds are the source of this secular world, while the undefiled seeds are the source of Buddhahood. The undefiled seeds are the reason for sentient beings to become Buddhas, so they are called "Buddha seeds". They are also Reality itself, so they are also called "Suchness." The storehouse consciousness possesses both purity and defilement, but the activities of the two kinds of seeds are entirely separate. The defiled seeds manifest themselves as this secular world. The manifestations perfume (permeate; *xun* 薰) back to the storehouse consciousness and deposit seeds as "habits" which remain defiled. The reason a sentient being can become a Buddha is by eliminating all the defiled seeds through cultivation and therefore the undefiled seeds can fully manifest. But it does not mean that every sentient being has undefiled seeds. The Yogācāra insists that an icchantika who cuts off the good roots does not have undefiled seeds and will never become a Buddha. In this sense, the Yogācāra position is that the mind is originally impure.

[12] Paul, *Philosophy of Mind in Sixth-Century China*, 46-7. See also Andō Toshio's *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* 天台性具思想論, 96-98.

sentient beings originally have the tathāgatagarbha, the Buddha-nature.[13] In the midst of these discussions and debates about the nature of Buddha-nature, a text of far-reaching influence enters the discourse, namely, the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng qi xin lun* 大乘起信論).

The *Awakening of Faith* is generally considered by scholars to be an apocryphal Chinese text composed in the sixth century.[14] Its pronouncements about the nature of sentient being's mind changed the direction of Chinese Buddhism, making mind-nature a defining feature of Buddha-nature. The text begins by defining the two inseparable aspects of the one mind of sentient beings: one aspect is **purity** or "the mind as Suchness (*zhenru xin* 真如心)" and the other is **defilement** or "the mind as arising and ceasing (*sheng mie xin* 生滅心)." "The mind as Suchness," which refers to tathāgatagarbha, is intrinsically pure, unchanging, and enlightened. The "mind as arising and ceasing" is conditioned origination, referring to tathāgatagarbha as ālaya-vijñāna that responds to conditions to generate all phenomena. The Huayan school later interpreted these two aspects of tathāgatagarbha as its "immutability" (*bubian* 不變) and its "following conditions"(*suiyuan* 隨緣)[15] and their relationship as that of "essence (*ti* 體) and function (*yung* 用)." As **essence**, the mind is Suchness. It is unchanging, and when functioning, it follows conditions and gives rise to the phenomenal world. When this happens, we have "the mind as arising and ceasing." This is the **function**. "The mind as

[13] Huijun 慧均, *Dasheng si lun xuan yi* 大乘四論玄義, X46: 601c-2a.

[14] Lai, " A Clue to the Authorship of the Awakening of Faith: Śikṣānanda's Redaction of the World 'Nien,'" 34-53.

[15] Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, 157-158.

arising and ceasing" (as a result of Suchness following conditions) is changing, but its essence remains unchanged. This relationship indicates that the mind as Suchness is the nature of all things and exists prior to all things that have resulted from Suchness following conditions. Therefore, existence is sequential and everything originates from mind-nature as Suchness. This last notion is called "nature-origination" (*xingqi* 性起),[16] the central thought in the Huayan's doctrine which is in direct contraposition to the Tiantai nature inclusion doctrine.

Awakening of Faith regards "the mind as arising and ceasing" (of sentient beings) as the other aspect of Buddha-nature (tathāgatagarbha) and as being original enlightenment. This theory shifts the focus about the mind of sentient beings from its defilement to its purity and changed the direction of thought of later Chinese Buddhist schools. The idea of mind-nature as Buddha-nature thus became the major doctrinal feature of Chinese Buddhism.

Buddha-nature Includes Defilement and Purity

It is in the 6th century treatise *The Method of Cessation and Contemplation in Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng zhiguan famen* 大乘止觀法門) that the idea of Buddha-nature including both defilement and purity appears. From this thought, Tiantai founder Zhiyi (538-597) transformed it into the teaching that expounds "Buddha-nature contains both good and evil." Andō Toshio asserts that Zhiyi's thought can be traced back to the Indian tathāgatagarbha tradition[17] and that *The Method* could be connected to Zhiyi's original

[16] Ibid., 157.

[17] Andō, *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* 天台性具思想論, 87. For example, *Śrīmālā-sūtra* and *Buddhadhātu-sāstra* discuss the idea that the tathāgatagarbha holds all the defiled and pure dharmas.

idea:[18]

> "Regarding the tathāgatagarbha includes defilement and purity, there are two types: first, the inherent defilement (*xing ran* 性染) and the inherent purity (*xing jing* 性淨); second, the phenomenal defilement (*shi ran* 事染) and the phenomenal purity (*shi jing* 事淨)."[19]

Whereas *Awakening of Faith* considers that the tathāgatagarbha holds only "the completion of all dharmas (things) of purity,"[20] in contrast to it, *The Method* insists that the tathāgatagarbha holds both defiled and pure dharmas. *The Method* claims that "inherently and all times, tathāgatagarbha includes both defiled and pure natures," so it can respond to conditions and give rise to all dharmas. Thus, it can manifest both the pure phenomenal activities of Buddhas and the defiled phenomenal activities of sentient beings.[21] That is, both defiled and pure natures and both defiled and pure phenomenal activities are inherently included in the tathāgatagarbha. Although the connection between *The Method* and Zhiyi's thought remains unclear, it is not impossible that Zhiyi was influenced by the idea of defiled nature in this treatise.[22]

Earlier, I mentioned that there is a disagreement between the Dilun sect and Shelun sect about the nature of Buddha-nature. Zhiyi regards as incorrect the Dilun's claim that the mind of purity is the source of the defiled phenomenal world and he names this view "self-production" (*zi sheng* 自生). Why? Because according to this view, purity can produce defilement. On the other hand, Zhiyi regards Shelun's view that the defiled mind

---

18 Ibid., 35.

19 *Dasheng zhiguan famen* 大乘止觀法門, T46: 647c.

20 *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論, T32: 576b. It says "The true mind is constantly unchanging and holds the completion of all dharmas of purity." (真心常恒不變，淨法滿足)

21 *Dasheng zhiguan famen* 大乘止觀法門, T46: 647c.

22 Andō, *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* 天台性具思想論, 35.

is the sole source of the phenomenal world equally wrong. He refers to this view as "other-production" (*ta sheng* 他生). According to Zhiyi, this position incorrectly suggests that defilement is produced by things other than the Reality of all things. In other words, Reality itself has no relationship with the defiled phenomenal world. Thus, while Dilun sees purity as the sole origin of phenomena, Shelun sees defilement as the sole origin of phenomena. Zhiyi criticizes the two sects for holding one-sided views.[23] In turn, he integrates their ideas and redefines the relationship between Reality and all things as **mutually included**. All pure, impure, good, and evil things are naturally existing in and as Reality, neither self-produced nor other-produced. Buddhas and sentient beings are no different in their natures, and this nature includes all the good and the evil of the ten realms. All the good and evil as Buddha-nature is the foundation for sentient beings to become Buddhas. Zhiyi's ideas on "Buddha-nature includes good and evil" are further developed through his uniquely original philosophical system known as Tiantai.

Zhiyi's Main Philosophical Framework

Before we explore Zhiyi's development of "Buddha-nature includes good and evil," a brief introduction of his main philosophical system is necessary.

Tiantai, as founded by Zhiyi, is a massive philosophical system that can be broadly divided into two areas, the doctrine and the contemplative practice. "Nature-inclusion as Reality" (*xing ju shi xiang* 性具實相) is the basis for "Buddha-nature includes good and evil" and both ideas are at the core of Tiantai doctrine and practice.

---

[23] Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 54a-b, 134a. See also Andō Toshio's *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* 天台性具思想論, 98-99.

"Nature-inclusion as Reality" is presented in his two major theories, the "Threefold Truth of Perfect Interpenetration" (*yuan rong san di* 圓融三諦) and the "Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought" (*yi nian san qian* 一念三千). The former approaches Reality from the perspective of the individual thing, while the latter approaches Reality from the angle of the universe as a whole.

At the core of the Threefold Truth theory are the three aspects of the Reality of everything: the Empty, the Provisional, and the Middle. Zhiyi's creation of the Threefold Truth is based on the Twofold Truth idea (the Emptiness and the Provisional) by Nāgārjuna, the central figure of the Mādyamika School. According to Nāgārjuna, everything is said to be empty because everything is without a permanent self. He considers this aspect as the Absolute or Ultimate Truth. However, this emptiness does not mean nothingness, it means that everything exists provisionally because of dependent origination (everything in the phenomenal world arises from conditional causation and exists impermanently in and of itself). This aspect is the Provisional Truth. Although Nāgārjuna uses the Middle Way to express the non-duality of the Twofold Truth, Zhiyi considers that Nāgārjuna places the Ultimate Truth at a higher level.[24] Brook Ziporyn agrees with Richard H. Robinson's view, "Nāgārjuna does not admit the existence of *kleśa* (defilements) in ultimate truth," and "He maintains a fixed hierarchy between ultimate and provisional truth."[25] To avoid this dichotomy, Zhiyi established a third truth, the Middle. It is middle because the Reality of all things cannot be captured by either the Empty or the Provisional Truths. The Middle indicates that Reality is both provisional

---

[24] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 742b.

[25] Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 106.

and empty, and, simultaneously, neither empty nor provisional. For Zhiyi, the three Truths are not arranged in sequence or hierarchy but coexist in everything. Each Truth includes the other two Truths. The three are thus united and mutually included in and identical to one another.[26] This is the Reality (the nature) of everything. Accordingly, all things inherently coexist in and as Reality and, thereby, are also mutually included in and identical to one another. All dharmas thus interpenetrate. The secular and the supra-mundane worlds are in unity. Buddhas and sentient beings are non-dual. A single thing not only includes everything but is the whole universe. Nothing is outside a single thing. Zhiyi also refers to this Threefold Truth as "the Reality of the Middle Way" (*zhong dao shi xiang* 中道實相).[27] Zhiyi's idea of Reality is thus characterized as "nature-inclusion"—everything is inherently included in Reality (nature) where everything as Reality is mutually included in one another.

Zhiyi's Threefold Truth significantly incorporates the "Ten Suchnesses" idea of the *Lotus Sutra* translated by Kumārajiva. The Ten Suchnesses express the ten aspects of everything and place all the dharmas of both the mundane (provisional) and the supra-mundane (ultimate) equally in Reality. That is, "all dharmas are Reality" (*zhu fa shi xiang* 諸法實相). The *Lotus Sutra* says,

> "Only Buddhas and Buddhas can perfectly realize that all dharmas are Reality. That is, each dharma's characteristic in Suchnesses, nature in suchnesses, essence in Suchnesses, power in Suchnesses, function in Suchnesses, and cause in Suchnesses, condition in Suchnesses, effect in Suchnesses, retribution in Suchnesses, and ultimate identity from beginning to end in Suchnesses."[28]

---

[26] Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 7b.

[27] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 693b.

[28] *Lotus Sutra*, T9: 5c.

All the mundane and supra-mundane aspects of all things as Reality indicate the Threefold Truth. That is, the inherent inclusion and mutual inclusion of all things in Reality. This sutra thus proves the interpenetration between Reality and the mundane provisional dharmas of the Threefold Truth.[29] By this logic, Zhiyi regards the Threefold Truth as the foundation of the *Lotus Sutra*.

The Threefold Truth is considered by Zhiyi as the mark of the highest teaching of the Buddha, the Round Teaching. The core of Zhiyi's doctrinal classification system (*pan jiao* 判教) is the Four Teachings. This is his way to explain the contradictions in the scriptures attributed to the Buddha. They are the Tripiṭaka Teaching (*zang jiao* 藏教), the Common Teaching (*tong jiao* 通教), the Separate Teaching (*bie jiao* 別教), and the Round Teaching (*yuan jiao* 圓教). The Tripiṭaka Teaching refers to Hīnayāna Buddhism (i.e., the Lesser Vehicle, as regarded by Mahāyāna Buddhism which considers itself as the Great Vehicle). The Common Teaching is the teaching that Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism have in common, particularly associated with Emptiness. The Separate Teaching is a teaching taught only to the Mahāyāna bodhisattvas. The Round Teaching is the perfect and highest teaching of Mahāyāna. Among the four, Zhiyi holds that only the Separate and Round Teachings demonstrate the doctrine of the Three Truths. However, the Separate Teaching does not show the idea of the three truths of perfect interpenetration. In the Separate Teaching, the Middle Truth is recognized as outside of the Empty Truth and the Provisional Truth and thereby is named the "Exclusive Middle" (*dan zhong* 但中). The Round Teaching is the Threefold Truth which shows the "Reality of the Middle Way."

---

[29] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 693b.

Zhiyi further develops the "Threefold Truth" into the "Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought" (*yi nian san qian* 一念三千), which Zhanran (711-782) (a Tiantai thinker who will be discussed in the next chapter) praised as "the utmost thorough ultimate doctrine."[30] For Zhiyi, the contemplation of mind (*guan xin* 觀心) is the core practice that fulfills the Threefold Truth. Even one transient thought in the mind embodies Reality. Thus, Reality can be reached by simultaneously observing the Empty, Provisional, and Middle Truths within a single thought. This is called "Threefold Contemplation in One Mind" (*yi xin san guan* 一心三觀),[31] the supreme practice of Tiantai. It reveals the Threefold Truth that all dharmas of the universe coexist and interpenetrate within one thought. "Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought" is a more subtle method Zhiyi uses to emphasize the integration of one thought and the universe. It means that a transient thought of sentient beings inherently possesses all the dharmas of the Three Thousand Worlds, the whole universe.

"Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought" integrates the "Ten Suchnesses" of the *Lotus Sutra*, the "Ten Realms" of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and the "Three Types of Worlds" of the *Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra*.[32] With the mutual inclusion idea in mind, Zhiyi considers that "one thought inherently contains ten realms" (*yi nian shi jie* 一念十界).[33] Thus, when one thought arises, it must belong to one of the ten realms. The ten realms are the Buddhist ten divisions of the universe: the first six are the unenlightened realms of

---

[30] Zhanran, *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, T46: 296a.

[31] See, for example, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 84b-85a.

[32] See T9: 5c; T10: 749a ;T25: 402a.

[33] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 696a. See also his *Sanguan yi* 三觀義, X55: 673c.

hell-beings, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras, humans, and gods. The latter four are the enlightened realms of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. Moreover, each realm also includes ten realms. In other words, "ten realms are mutually included in one another" (*shi jie hu ju* 十界互具). Thus, one thought contains one hundred realms. Each realm can also be observed by Ten Suchnesses, so one thought thus contains one thousand Suchnesses. In addition, everything is associated with the Three Types of Worlds (the sentient world, the non-sentient world, and the world of five-aggregates). Accordingly, one thought possesses Three Thousand Worlds, i.e., the whole universe.[34] Here "Three Thousand" does not refer to a true number of worlds but it is a symbolic term to signify the entire provisional universe where all dharmas as Reality inherently exist and are mutually included in one another. The "Three Thousand" then becomes a Tiantai term for Reality as nature-inclusion.

The "Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought" expresses the interpenetration of mind and the universe, both of which are Reality. The difference between Zhiyi's "nature-inclusion" thought and that of "nature-origination" is that for Zhiyi the relationship between the mind and all dharmas are not in sequence but inherently mutually inclusive. As Zhiyi says,

> "These Three Thousand are within one single thought. If no mind, there is nothing. If there is a transient thought, it inherently possesses all the Three Thousand [worlds]. This does not mean that one thought comes first and all the dharmas then come after, nor does it mean that all the dharmas come first and then the one thought come later. … The mind is just all dharmas, and all dharmas are just the mind."[35]

Unlike the nature-origination thought, the mind does not give rise to all the dharmas.

---

[34] Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 54a.

[35] Ibid.

Both mind and all dharmas as Reality inherently include and are identical to each other. The whole universe is the true aspect of any single thought. Any single thought is Reality, or Suchness, or mind-nature, or Buddha-nature, or dharma-nature, throughout the universe. As Zhiyi says, "One thought of ignorance is the mind of dharma-nature" (*yi nian wu ming fa xing xin* 一念無明法性心).[36] This also conveys the idea that "saṁsāra is just nirvāṇa" and "afflictions are exactly the bodhi (enlightenment)."

The theory of "Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought," especially its sub-theories that "one thought contains ten realms" and that "ten realms are mutually included in one another," leads to the idea that Buddha-nature contains both good and evil. In fact, the ten realms, i.e., the Three Thousand Worlds, means all the good and evil of the universe. That a single thought as Reality contains the ten realms indicates that the mind-nature, i.e., the Buddha-nature, inherently contains all the good and evil dharmas. Thus, every dharma, no matter whether it is good or evil, that coexists as Reality in nature, is identical to and united with the whole universe. That is, every good or evil dharma contains all the good and evil dharmas. Thus, all the good and evil dharmas are then mutually included in one another.

Zhiyi's idea of mutual inclusion of the ten realms, against the traditional division of the ten realms, shows that each realm is the whole universe and the whole universe is within each realm. The Buddha realm as the supremely good realm contains the other nine, such as the hell realm, while the hell realm, as the extremely evil realm, embraces the other nine, including the Buddha realm. Although Buddhas and sentient beings belong to different realms, there is no demarcation between them. Reality is that both the Buddha

---

[36] Zhiyi, *Si nian chu* 四念處, T46: 578c.

and sentient beings in nature contain the good of Buddha and the evil of sentient beings. Accordingly, Buddha-nature includes all the good and evil of the ten realms, and all the good or evil dharmas as Reality are mutually included in one another. This is the gist of the idea that Buddha-nature includes good and evil.

In sum, the idea that Buddha-nature includes good and evil stands on Zhiyi's thought of nature-inclusion as Reality, characterized by inherent inclusion (*ben ju* 本具), mutual inclusion (*hu ju* 互具), and identity (*xiang ju* 相即). Zhiyi demonstrates an inseparable universe of interpenetration. Each dharma as Reality, no matter whether good or evil, equally contains the whole universe. As Zhiyi says, "Even a single form or smell is no other than the Middle Way."[37] Reality is not only the interpenetration of all dharmas but also that of the mind and all dharmas. Zhiyi shows the unity of all opposites in one thought. The oppositions of good and evil, subjects and objects, and the spiritual and the material, as well as the mundane and the supra-mundane, are all erased in one thought as Buddha-nature. His emphasis on one thought also presents the significance of a single thought in practice. One thought of a Buddha is not above that of a sentient being. Both their thoughts interpenetrate with the whole universe and are identical to Buddha-nature. Thus, every sentient being can be transformed into the ultimate Reality within one ignorant thought. Accordingly, "nature-inclusion as Reality" and "Buddha-nature includes good and evil" become the two typical features of Tiantai thought.

What is Good and Evil ?

Zhiyi presents a detailed definition of good and evil. In terms of being on the way

---

[37] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 761b.

toward liberation, he defines that "those things of obstruction are evil and those things beyond obstruction are good."[38] He considers good and evil to be flexible, especially in relation to the Ten Realms. Compared to the three lowest realms, the human realm and the god realm are good, yet these two realms are relatively evil when compared to the good of the "Two Lesser Vehicles," śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha. But the realms of these two vehicles also become evil when compared to the good of the bodhisattva realm. The realm of the bodhisattva becomes evil too when compared to the good of the Buddha realm. Consequently, only the Buddha realm is ultimately good and the other nine realms are all evil. Likewise, the goodness taught in the Tripiṭaka Teachings, the Common Teachings, and the Separate Teaching become evil when compared to the Round Teaching. Thus, only the Round Teaching is absolutely good.[39] Zhiyi therefore proposes an absolute standard for the good—"perfect understanding of Reality." He says,

> "The good in accord with Reality is named the [Buddha-]Way. The violation of Reality is named the non-Way. If one realizes that [the nature of] all evil is not evil but Reality, one [can] go into the non-Way (the nine realms other than the Buddha realm) with perfect understanding and follows the Buddha-Way. If there is any attachment to the Buddha-Way, one does not digest the sweet dew (the Way) and the Way becomes the non-Way. By discussing good and evil in this way, the meanings [of good and evil] then become clear."[40]

The decisive factor in determining what is good or evil does not hinge on the appearance of things but rather on whether or not one understands Reality. Good means to be in accordance with Reality, whereas evil means to be in violation of Reality. When viewing evil with the perfect understanding of Reality, evil is Reality itself. Evil, then, is the absolute good. The non-Way is in fact the Buddha-Way. Contrarily, viewing the

---

[38] Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 17b.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 17b-c.

Buddha-Way with attachment, the absolute good turns into evil and Buddha-Way thus becomes non-Way.

Inherent Good and Inherent Evil

Zhiyi's idea concerning inherent evil appears in several of his works, such as the *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義) and the *Great Cessation and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀).[41] Among these works, as Brook Ziporyn points out, the *locus classicus* of this idea is found in his *Profound Meaning of the Guanyin Chapter* (*guanyin xuanyi* 觀音玄義).[42] Zhiyi says,

> "Question: Since the Conditioning and Revealing aspects of Buddha-nature includes the inherent good, do they also include the inherent evil?
> Answer: Yes, they include.
> Question: What kind of good and evil do icchantikas and Buddhas cut off?
> Answer: Icchantikas cut off cultivated good (*xiu shan* 修善) but not inherent good (*xing shan* 性善). Buddhas cut off cultivated evil (*xiu e* 修惡) but not inherent evil (*xing e* 性惡).
> Question: Why can't inherent good and inherent evil be cut off?
> Answer: Inherent good and inherent evil are nothing but the Dharma-gates of good and of evil. What is inherent cannot be changed and no one can destroy it throughout the three periods of time (past, present and future). It cannot even be cut off or broken."[43]

In this three question and answer dialogue, Zhiyi makes three main points the foundation of his idea on "Buddha-nature includes good and evil". The first exchange explains why Buddha-nature includes both good and evil, thus implying the equality of sentient beings and Buddhas. Zhiyi uses his Three Causes theory to explain

---

[41] See, for example, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 743c-744a. See also *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 17b-c.

[42] Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 254.

[43] T34: 882c.

"Buddha-nature includes good and evil." Based on the *Mahā-parinirvāna-sūtra*,[44] Zhiyi describes the Buddha-nature in three aspects which serve as the three Causes for attaining Buddhahood (*san yin fo xing* 三因佛性). Buddha-nature as Direct Cause (*zheng yin foxing* 正因佛性) is the Suchness or Reality with which all sentient beings are endowed. It is the Direct Cause as the potential for achieving Buddhahood. Buddha-nature as Revealing Cause (*liao yin foxing* 了因佛性) is the wisdom that realizes Suchness. Buddha-nature as Conditioning Cause (*yuan yin foxing* 緣因佛性) refers to all the merits and practices that support the wisdom in realizing Suchness.[45] Other schools discuss only Direct Cause and describe it as neither pure nor impure or neither good nor evil. For Zhiyi, without the support of the other two aspects, Direct Cause alone is not enough for sentient beings to achieve Buddhahood.

Zhiyi adds two aspects that more fully describe Buddha-nature, the Revealing Cause and the Conditioning Cause, both of which include not only good but also evil. The Revealing Cause includes all kinds of understanding, because all can develop to true wisdom. For example, he says, "Desires are [Buddha-]seeds. Anger and ignorance are [Buddha-]seeds. These are the [Buddha-]seeds of Revealing Cause."[46] The Conditioning Cause includes all the provisional activities because all can support the mind to realize Suchness. For example, he says, "The ten evil deeds are [Buddha-]seeds. They are the

---

[44] See *Da bo nie pan jing* 大般涅槃經, T12: 531b. The *Mahā-parinirvāna-sūtra* discusses Buddha-nature in relation to Arising Cause (*sheng yin* 生因) Revealing Cause (*liao yin* 了因), Direct Cause (*zheng yin* 正因) and Conditioning Cause (*yuan yin* 緣因). Also see Brook Ziporyn's *Evil and/or/as The Good,* 417n38.

[45] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 802a.

[46] Zhiyi, *Weimo jing xuan shu* 維摩經玄疏, T38: 553a.

[Buddha-]seeds of Conditioning Cause."[47] The three aspects of Buddha-nature are inherently possessed by Buddhas and sentient beings alike. Accordingly, Buddha-nature includes good and evil and this idea applies not only to Buddhas but also to sentient beings. This also illuminates the equality of Buddhas and sentient beings. In nature, the Buddha and sentient beings are equal.

Zhiyi connects these three causes with the Threefold Truth.[48] He considers that the three causes are not separate but are included in each other. The Direct Cause is the Middle Truth, the Conditioning Cause is the Provisional Truth, and the Revealing Cause is the Empty Truth. Consequently, all three aspects of Buddha-nature contain all the good and evil because the Three Truths interpenetrate. In other words, Buddha-nature contains all the good and evil dharmas and all of them are included in each other. This is what Zhiyi calls "the Buddha-nature of the Middle Way" (*zhongdao foxing* 中道佛性),[49] which contains not only good but also evil.

In the second exchange, Zhiyi explains that the distinction between sentient beings and Buddhas does not consist in nature but in cultivation. Zhiyi uses the icchantikas (considered the least likely to become Buddhas) to represent sentient beings. Icchantikas and Buddhas are equal in nature because both inherently possess good and evil. However, they are differentiated by cultivated good 修善 and cultivated evil 修惡. Icchantikas have not become Buddhas because they cut off cultivated good yet they still possess inherent good 性善. Buddhas have cut off their cultivated evil yet they still possess

---

47 Ibid., 553a.

48 Zhiyi, *Jin guan ming jing xuan yi* 金光明經玄義, T39: 8a-b.

49 Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 761b.

inherent evil 性惡.

In the third and last exchange, Zhiyi claims that inherent good and evil are not only in the natures of Buddhas and sentient beings but that they are also the gates to the Dharma (Reality), i.e., the Dharma-gate to Buddhahood. Since inherent good and inherent evil can never change and be cut off, this allows for the two corresponding practices of the "Dharma-gate of inherent good" (*xing shan fa men* 性善法門) and the "Dharma-gate of inherent evil" (*xing e fa men* 性惡法門). These two Dharma-gates can not be changed or cut off either. Thus, both the good and the evil are relevant practices for attaining Buddhahood.

The key statement of the above dialogue is this sentence: "Icchantikas cut off cultivated good but not inherent good. Buddhas cut off cultivated evil but not inherent evil." Actually, the theory that icchantikas possess inherent good was previously proposed by Daosheng, but the idea that Buddhas do not cut off inherent evil is uniquely Zhiyi's. Inherent evil is at the core of "Buddha-nature includes good and evil." This new understanding slowly changed over the course of Tiantai thinking throughout its development and Chuandeng would inherit this uniquely powerful idea and take it to its full maturity.

Zhiyi further explains inherent evil by raising a challenging question: While icchantikas with inherent good can give rise to cultivated good and thereby become Buddhas, inversely, is it possible for Buddhas with inherent evil to give rise to cultivated evil and return to being sentient beings? Of course not. Buddhas and sentient beings have a different understanding about their nature. "Icchantikas do not understand perfectly the good that is in their nature and for this reason can be tainted by good and thus give rise to

cultivated good." The Buddhas understand perfectly the evil that is in their nature and for this reason "they can not be tainted by evil, so they never give rise to cultivated evil" and can never return to being sentient beings. "Because Buddhas perfectly understand evil, they are free and at ease in evil," Zhiyi says. "Therefore, [Buddhas] can extensively use all the various Dharma-gates of evil to transform and liberate sentient beings, using these Dharma-gates every moment and being untainted by them at every moment."[50]

Zhiyi emphasizes that the Dharma-gate of inherent evil the Buddhas employ, which is entirely different from the cultivated evil of icchantikas, is another important method for liberating sentient beings. As Brook Ziporyn describes, "the inclusion of evil in the Buddha's nature is essential if he is to respond to sentient beings by sometimes taking on evil forms, … These responses must come from something in his own nature."[51] In Zhiyi's view, all evil acts the Buddhas employ come from Reality, i.e., their nature. Zhiyi says,

> "The Buddha also does not cut off the inherent evil of his nature, when triggered by the right conditions, perfumed by the power of his compassion, he enters into the lowest hells and takes part in all evil acts in order to transform sentient beings. … He comprehends that the realm of evil is itself the realm of Actuality, and thus can attain liberation even in the midst of the five unforgivable sins."[52]

All the evil acts the Buddhas perform are precisely inherent in nature. Zhiyi points out that this is exactly what *the Vimalakīrti Sutra* says, "[When a bodhisattva] goes into the non-Way, [he] follows and understands perfectly the Buddha-Way."[53] Since evil can be the skillful means the Buddhas use to liberate sentient beings, it is also an important

---

[50] Zhiyi, *Guanyin xuanyi* 觀音玄義, T34: 882c.

[51] Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 255.

[52] Zhiyi, *Guanyin xuanyi* 觀音玄義, T34: 883a.

[53] Ibid.

Dharma-gate for sentient beings to attain Buddhahood. This is the so-called "Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil."

The "Buddha-nature includes good and evil" idea is characterized by inherent evil and also by the feature that good and evil are mutually included in each other. Since evil is connected with the Buddha-Way, good and evil are inseparable. For Zhiyi, good and evil are opposite to each other, yet, more importantly, they are unified. As he says in *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*, "The nature and phenomena of evil is exactly the nature and phenomena of good. Good comes from evil. Without evil there is no good. Turning evil over is precisely the fulfillment of good."[54] That Buddhas do not cut off inherent evil indicates that good includes evil. That icchantikas do not cut off inherent good denotes that evil includes good. Good and evil mutually include each other and thereby are identical to each other. Evil includes good, so that the Dharma-gate of inherent evil can lead to the good of the Buddha-Way. Zhiyi broadens in scope the methods of practice with this idea.

The Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil

Zhiyi's idea of "Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil" shows us that the Buddhist practice is not limited to the good but that evil is also an important practice for achieving Buddhahood. However, this does not mean that evil actions are equal to the good or that people should do evil rather than good. Otherwise, Zhiyi would not condemn evil deeds. As he says, "Ignorance and most serious evil deeds together result in [the rebirth in]

---

[54] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 743c-744a.

hell."[55] The rationale for this practice is that evil inherently possesses good and vice versa. Based on this belief, sentient beings can develop the good from evil and Buddhas can employ evil as a skillful means to liberate sentient beings.

Zhiyi explains "the good inside evil" with the analogy of "fire-nature inside bamboo." He says,

> "It is as if bamboo has the fire-nature within but this does not mean that it is on fire. The fire-nature is there without burning. But when it meets the right conditions, fire appears and it can make something burn. Evil has good-nature within but it does not mean that the good activity appears. When encountering the right conditions, it can overturn evil. There is fire[-nature] inside bamboo. When the fire appears, it burns down the bamboo. There is good inside evil. When the good manifests, it destroys the evil. Therefore, both the nature and activity of evil are identical to that of good."[56]

Evil can turn into good because the good-nature inside evil manifests and destroys the evil itself. That is why one can develop good from evil and achieve the Buddha-Way, as long as one perfectly understands Reality.

Zhiyi calls this way of attaining Buddhahood "opposite seed" (*xiang dui zhong* 相對種). He regards Buddha-nature as Buddha-seeds. Just as seeds can become trees, one who has Buddha-seeds can become Buddha. He groups Buddha-seeds into two types, opposite seeds and parallel seeds (*tong lei zhong* 同類種). Parallel seeds are the good seeds that can lead to the good of Buddhahood. Opposite seeds are the evil seeds that can lead to the good. Traditionally, only parallel seeds are considered as Buddha-seeds, but Zhiyi asserts that all the evil of the other nine realms are also the Buddha-seeds. Zhiyi particularly points out that the three defiled paths of sentient beings are actually the opposite seeds of the three virtues of the Buddhas. He says,

---

55 Ibid., 698c.

56 Ibid., 743c-744a.

> "The three paths (affliction, karma, suffering) are the seeds of the three virtues (Dharma-body, wisdom, and liberation). The *Vimalakīrti Sutra* says, 'All kinds of afflictions are the seeds of the tathāgata.' This shows that the path of affliction has prajñā (wisdom) within. It also says, 'The five unforgivable karmas [leading to the worst hell] give rise to the characteristics of liberation.' This is that from the non-good comes the good liberation. 'All sentient beings are the characteristics of nirvāṇa that cannot be destroyed.' This is that saṁsāra is the Dharma-body. This [description] is about opposite seeds. In terms of the parallel seeds, 'every action of lowering the head or raising the hand'(in practice) is a seed of liberation. All kinds of understanding of the worldly knowledge and of the Three Vehicles (Two Vehicles plus the Bodhisattva Vehicle) are the seeds of prajñā. All who have mind will eventually become Buddhas refer to the seed of the Dharma-body."[57]

The three paths are seemingly opposite to good, but they contain good and can develop into the good of the Buddha. This is what is meant by the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.

Zhiyi also points out the necessity of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in daily life. Since only the Buddha realm is the absolute good, he reminds us that all the other nine realms, even that of the arhats (the fruition of the śrāvaka realm) and bodhisattvas still remain evil and live in an evil environment. But they do not need to abandon themselves to evil. Otherwise, they can never become Buddhas. Rather, evil is the turning point for becoming Buddhas. They just need to deeply contemplate evil as Reality, i.e., develop evil into the good. He cites the following examples to prove that one can achieve sagehood while acting in an evil way:

> "People should cultivate the contemplative wisdom on evil. Just like some people in the time of the Buddha who had wives and sons or were occupied with official and worldly business yet they could still attain the Way. The more people Aṅgulimālya 央掘摩羅 killed, the more compassionate he became. Jetā 祇陀末利 only drank but at the same time only observed the precept. Vasumitrā 婆須蜜多 had excessive sexual desire but lived in celibacy. Devadatta's 提婆達多 false views were no other than right views."[58]

The evil those sages did did not harm their good sagehood. Likewise, their enlightenment

---

[57] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文句, T34: 94b-c.

[58] Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 17c.

did not hinder them from doing evil. The manifestation of Buddha-nature is not by abandoning evil to pursue good but by revealing the good from evil. Zhiyi wants sentient beings to practice and attain Buddhahood amid the very evil of daily life. As he continues,

> "If all the evil is always evil, then people such as they (sages) could not practice and would remain as ordinary people forever. But evil has the Way within. Although they went into a variety of evil obstruction, they attained the fruit of sagehood. Thus, evil does not obstruct the Way. Likewise, the Way does not hinder evil. The person of stream-enterer (the first stage of the śrāvaka path) had the growing sexual desire. Pilindavatsa [as an arhant] still had arrogance. Śāriputra [as an arhat] still got angry. Did these harm their no-outflow (undefilement) fruit?"[59]

Without evil, there is no way to have good. Zhiyi even asserts that without the Dharma-gate of inherent evil there is no Buddha-Way. He says,

> "The three poisons (desire, anger, ignorance) are the three Dharma-gates. … The sages who want to save themselves and save others must enter these three gates. Apart from them, there is no Way. Therefore, the *Sarva-dharmāpravṛtti-nirdeśa Sūtra* (*wu xing jing* 無行經) says, 'Desire is no other than the Way, so are anger and ignorance.' All dharmas are completely inherent in these three poisons."[60]

He emphasizes that, no matter whether it is for one's own benefit or for that of others, the three poisons, i.e., the afflictions that trap sentient beings in saṁsāra, are the necessary entries into the Way. Since he thinks that sentient beings have to take evil as Dharma-gates to attain the Way, the Buddhas then have to use evil from the good to help them. The Buddhas understand perfectly that the three poisons inherently possess all dharmas; that is, the poisons are Reality. Thus, Buddhas use the three poisons from Reality to help sentient beings, while sentient beings become Buddhas by revealing Reality from within the poisons.

---

[59] Ibid.

[60] Zhiyi, *Guanyin yi shu* 觀音義疏, T34: 930a.

For Zhiyi, the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is set up to help sentient beings reach Buddhahood. It requires every sentient being to personally understand evil as Reality. Zhiyi expresses this process through the “Six Identities” (*liu ji* 六即), a way to describe the six stages in the process of becoming a Buddha in his system of Reality. He asserts that any stage a sentient being is at is identical to Buddhahood and the six stages mutually include one another. First, identity in principle (*li ji* 理即): all sentient beings inherently possess Buddha-nature. Whether or not they know this principle of Buddha-nature, they all are identical to the Buddha in nature. Second, identity in name (*ming zi ji* 名字即): although they possess Buddha-nature, they do not know it until hearing the name of the principle. Third, identity in contemplation (*guan xing ji* 觀行即): after accepting the principle, these beings start contemplating it. Fourth, identity in resemblance (*xiang shi ji* 相似即): with further practice, they seem to realize the principle, but in fact they do not. Fifth, identity in partial realization (*fen zheng ji* 分證即): they begin to realize and start to break free from their ignorance but only partially reveal the Budha-nature. Sixth, ultimate identity (*jiu jing ji* 究竟即): they become an actual Buddha. The Six Identities expresses the equality of Buddhas and sentient beings as well as the necessity of practice. Although sentient beings are identical to Buddhas, they are not actually Buddhas. The number “six” represents the different stages of practice, which prevents sentient beings from being arrogant. The term “identity” shows their equality in nature, which prevents sentient beings from giving up practice.

Zhiyi explains the process of contemplating evil in his *Great Cessation and Contemplation* by using the idea of the Six Identities. Regarding the identity in principle, he lists several concepts from the *Vimalakīrti* to demonstrate evil as Reality is the

principle. As he says,

> "The *Vīmalakīrti Sutra* says, '[When a bodhisattva] goes into the non-Way, [he] follows and understands perfectly the Buddha-Way.' 'All sentient beings are the form of enlightenment which cannot be obtained as well as are the form of nirvāna which cannot be destroyed.' 'For those who are arrogant, they are taught that abandoning sexual desire, anger and ignorance are the means to achieve liberation. For those without arrogance, they are taught that the nature of sexual desire, anger and ignorance is no other than liberation.' 'All the tiring phenomenal things are the seeds of tathāgata.' 'Mountains, oceans, forms and tastes are non-dual and non-different.' [What] This all means is to, contemplate evil as the inconceivable 'principle.'"[61]

The sentence claiming that "the nature of sexual desire, anger and ignorance is no other than liberation" concisely states that evil is Reality and denotes the three poisons as the Dharma-gates. Zhiyi writes again in another work that the purport this sentence conveys is exactly the "identity in principle."[62] Zhiyi skips the second stage, "identity in name," because it is clearly the stage in which sentient beings know about the idea of evil as Reality after hearing it named. As for the other four identities, he says,

> "One constantly practices the contemplative wisdom in accordance with the principle of evil obstruction, inseparable like a person and his shadow. This is called the stage of [identity] in contemplation. When all the evil and worldly things one contemplates on do not violate Reality, it is called the stage of [identity] in resemblance. [After that,] One enters the position of Copper-Wheel[63] and destroys the root of obstruction. The root means ignorance. When the root collapses, the branches break and the Buddha-nature starts to be revealed. This is the stage of [identity] in partial realization. And, the Buddhas who completely eliminate the obstruction, this is ultimate [identity]."[64]

Zhiyi concludes that "the obstructions such as desire contain the gradations of the Six

---

[61] Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 18b.

[62] Zhiyi, *Weimo jing xuan shu* 維摩經玄疏, T38: 52a.

[63] The stages of "the ten abidings" among the fifty two stages of the bodhisattva. See Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 69c.

[64] Ibid., 18b.

Identities and simultaneously possess all the good beyond obstructions."[65] It shows that within evil there are Dharma-gates leading to the good of Buddha. The evil of each stage, which includes all the good, shows that sentient beings of each stage include both good and evil. Zhiyi uses Six Identities to point out that the equality of Buddhas and sentient beings is that both good and evil are inherently included in nature as well as to make the Dharma-gate of inherent evil workable in the process of becoming a Buddha.

When Zhiyi used "good and evil" in reference to Buddha-nature, he created a new stage in the development of the theory of Buddha-nature in Chinese Buddhist history. Zhiyi redefined "defilement and purity" (*ran jing* 染淨) as "good and evil" (*shan e* 善惡). "Good and evil" has always been a significant theme in Confucian philosophy. By using these two terms Zhiyi gives the originally more Indian terms, "purity and defilement," a more Chinese philosophical flavor. Zhiyi's idea not only further developed the Buddha-nature concept but also revealed features of native Chinese theory about human-nature. An important issue in Chinese philosophy has always been whether humans are evil by nature or good by nature. Following Confucius's thought, Mencius 孟子(372-289 BCE) believed that humans are good by nature, whereas Xunzi 荀子 (313-238 BCE) believed they are evil by nature. Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE-18) would further assert that human nature is a blend of good and evil (*xing shan e hun* 性善惡混). According to him, "One who cultivates the good [nature] is a good man, while one who cultivates the evil [nature] is an evil man."[66] Zhiyi's ideas on good and evil are essentially different, but what they have in common is that they are part of this ongoing

---

[65] Ibid.

[66] See his *Fayan* 法言, chapter 3, in Han Jing's *Fa yan quan yi* 法言全譯, 100.

discourse on good and evil. Yang Xiong uses “blend” 混 to resolve the conflict between good and evil, while Zhiyi uses “inclusion” 具. Both theories give people the equal opportunity to become sages and emphasize acquired cultivation as the key to being a good or evil man. However, the “blended” theory lacks two Buddhist components: ultimate Reality and mutual inclusion. For the non-Buddhist philosopher-scholar, good and evil are just two kinds of worldly morality. The nuance in Zhiyi’s framework is his use of “good and evil” borrowed from Chinese philosophical discourse rather than using the typical Indian Buddhist term “purity and impurity.” On the one hand, he adjusts his idea to an ordinary Chinese theme, and on the other, he goes deeper into the theory of Buddha-nature.

The competing debates on the characteristics of Buddha-nature reflected the Buddhist intellectual scene in Zhiyi’s time. The focus of Buddhist teachings shifted from that of emptiness-nature of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* to that of the Buddha-nature of the *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*. The *Lotus Sutra*, promoting the ideas that all sentient beings will become Buddhas and that all things are Reality, were popular themes among Buddhists as well. But Chinese Buddhist scholars of differing sects did not really develop any original ideas and were simply interpreting the different teachings of Indian Buddhism. Zhiyi, influenced by the intellectual and spiritual dynamic going on around him, made the *Lotus Sutra* the central scripture of his framework. Ultimately, Zhiyi would synthesize this dynamic of disparate ideas to create a philosophical system uniquely Chinese in character: Tiantai.

Chapter 4 The Development of Nature-inclusion Thought from the Tang to the Yuan: Zhanran, Zhili and Huaize

Jingxi Zhanran 荊溪湛然 (711-782)

Zhanran lived during the middle of the Tang dynasty (618-907), about one hundred years after Zhiyi. This period was marked by a more mature stage of Chinese Buddhism with the appearance of new schools and their respective doctrinal teachings. The Huayan, Faxiang, and Chan schools were especially influential[1] and it was the Huayan nature-origination thought that dominated the philosophical discussion about Buddha-nature. Many scholars regard the Tang as the golden age of Chinese Buddhism. Yet, Tiantai was in a state of decline by then. In fact, Andō Toshio calls the time during which Zhanran lived "the first dark age of Tiantai."[2] Against this background, Zhanran nevertheless revitalized Tiantai, differentiating it from other schools, by using chiefly the idea of "inclusion" in his criticisms against the Huayan theory of nature-origination, while at the same time incorporating one of the latter's main ideas, the dynamics of "immutability" (*bubian* 不變) and "following conditions" (*suiyuan* 隨緣), into his own theory.

Zhanran was the first thinker to use the term "inclusion (*ju* 具)" to separate Tiantai from other schools:

> "The [Tiantai] contemplation absolutely differs from others. It contains all things in the ten directions and in the three periods (past, present, future) such as the ordinary beings and sages and all the causes and effects. The reason is that it calls for the contemplation of 'inclusion.' 'Inclusion' means the Provisional. The Provisional is exactly the Empty and the Middle."[3]

---

[1] Zhipan, *Fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀, T49:188c-189a.

[2] Andō, *Tendai gaku* 天台學, 300.

[3] Zhanran, *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, T46: 289c.

Notably, here he emphasizes “Buddha-nature includes both good and evil” as the representative idea of “inclusion” of the Round Teaching. He says:

> “Tathāgatas do not cut off the inherent evil and icchantikas do not cut off the inherent good. When this meaning alone is pointed out, all the hindrances to [the understanding of Round Teaching] will automatically disappear.”[4]

He uses “Three Thousand Worlds” to emphasize that good and evil are inherent in Buddha-nature. Good and evil are neither the productions of Buddha-nature nor separate from it. According to him,

> “The Conditioning and Revealing Causes [of Buddha-nature] of inherent virtue originally exist. The Three Thousand as Empty Truth are the Revealing Cause. The Three Thousand as Provisional Truth are the Conditioning Cause. The Three Thousand as Middle Truth are the Direct Cause. Thereby, other schools only know that icchantikas do not cut off Direct Cause but do not know that they do not cut off the Conditioning and Revealing Causes of inherent virtue. Thus, good and evil are no other than Three Thousand.”[5]

For Zhanran, “inclusion,” particularly the inclusion of inherent good and inherent evil, is what makes Tiantai the Round Teaching and what differentiates Tiantai from all other Buddhist schools.

From the viewpoint of “inclusion,” Zhanran introduces the concept of “Principle includes the Three Thousand Worlds” (*li ju san qian* 理具三千) as a new way to explain the dynamics of “immutability” (*bubian*) and “following conditions”(*suiyuan*) expounded by the Huayan school. Let us remember that the Huayan characterizes this dynamic as that of essence (*ti*) and function (*yong*). As explained in chapter three, Huayan regards the unchanging Suchness as the pure mind and the essence prior to the existence of all things. The function of essence is no other than Suchness following conditions. This leads to the

---

[4] Ibid., 296a.

[5] Ibid.

production of all things. Therefore, Suchness (Buddha-nature) and all things are sequential and all things originate from Suchness. Huayan further defines essence and function using the paradigm of principle (*li* 理) and phenomenon (*shi* 事). Huayan stresses that all things arise from this same principle and it is originally identical to the pure mind as Buddha-nature. It is based on this "same principle" that the Huayan could claim that all sentient beings are originally Buddhas and demonstrates the interpenetration of all things, i.e., "the non-obstruction among phenomena" (*shi shi wu ai* 事事無礙).[6]

Influenced by the principle/phenomenon paradigm, Zhanran uses the essence/function relationship of nature-origination to further clarify nature-inclusion. He says, "Because the principle includes [all things], then there is phenomenal function (activities)."[7] However, to differentiate the principle defined by Huayan as the "pure mind" that is the primal purity that exists prior to all things, Zhanran redefines the principle as that which includes the Three Thousand Worlds (the entire phenomenal world):

> "The inconceivable status is that in one thought its 'principle includes Three Thousand'. Therefore, it is said: one thought includes the causes and effects, the ordinary and the sage, the greater and lesser [vehicles], circumstantial and direct rewards, self and others. Therefore, the transformations (the phenomenal world) are no other than the Three Thousand."[8]

For Zhanran, Buddha-nature as principle includes the Three Thousand. As mentioned in chapter three, the Three Thousand Worlds represents all the good and the

---

6 Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, 7.

7 Zhanran, *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, T46: 293a.

8 Zhanran, *Jingang pei* 金剛錍, T46: 785b.

evil of the ten realms of existence. Thus, although Zhanran incorporates the terms and phrases the Huayan uses into the Tiantai lexicon, he adapts them in accordance with nature-inclusion. This adaptation is evidenced in some of his works, "All the dharmas are the Suchness, because [their essence] is unchanging. The Suchness is all dharmas, because it follows the conditions."[9] "Following the conditions yet unchanging, it is thus called nature. Unchanging yet following the conditions, it is thus called mind."[10] Unlike the pure mind as unchanging principle found in Huayan, for Zhanran the unchanging principle already includes the Three Thousand. When it follows conditions, it manifests the phenomenal worlds of Three Thousand. Both the principle and the phenomena are Three Thousand. As he says, "Three Thousand are constantly there. They are both essence and function."[11]

Zhanran thus considers the Huayan position as the Separate Teaching and confirms Tiantai as the Round Teaching in terms of doctrinal classification. He claims that the idea of "inclusion" is the difference between the Separate and the Round teachings. Only the Rounding Teaching demonstrates "inclusion," while the Separate, the Common, and the Tripiṭaka teachings do not.[12] He censures Huayan for not seeing that the principle as Buddha-nature contains all the good and all the evil of the ten realms because Huayan only sees that the principle is the Buddha realm and is outside of the defiled nine realms. His criticisms continue by pointing out that the Huayan only sees that the nine realms are produced after Suchness as principle follows the condition of ignorance. This implies, in

---

[9] Ibid., 782c.

[10] Zhanran, *Zhiguan dayi* 止觀大意, T46: 460b.

[11] Zhanran, *Shi bu e men* 十不二門, T46: 703c.

[12] Zhanran, *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, T46: 289c-290a.

his mind, that the nine realms do not originally exist in Suchness. If this is the case, then one has to cut off the nine realms to become a Buddha. As Zhanran says, "[If one] only considers the principle, then [one] must cut off the nine realms [to become a Buddha],"[13] For him, this highlights the deficiency of Huayan: a deficiency that is in direct opposition to Zhiyi's pronouncement that "Tathāgatas do not cut off the inherent evil and icchantikas do not cut off the inherent good." For Zhanran, the Huayan view of Buddha-nature is that of the "one-sided pure Suchness."[14] It is exactly the "Exclusive Middle" as exemplified in the Separate Teaching supporting that the Middle Truth is outside the Provisional Truth and the Empty Truth. Thus, under this framework, the three truths are not mutually included in one another and do not convey the meaning of "inclusion."

Tiantai thinkers use non-duality to reject any idea that is dual. For this reason, Zhanran proposes the new theory of "the non-duality of nature and practice" (*xing xiu bu er* 性修不二). He thus further develops Zhiyi's view. Generally speaking, "nature" is inherent virtue (*xing de* 性德), whereas "practice" is cultivated attainment (*xiu de* 修得) in Buddhism. In contrast to this view, Zhiyi broadens the meaning of virtue to include inherent evil and inherent good and "practice" to include cultivated good and cultivated evil. That is why Zhiyi could declare, "Icchantikas cut off cultivated good but not inherent good. Buddhas cut off cultivated evil but not inherent evil." In this statement, inherent good and inherent evil constitute the virtue that cannot be cut off, while, seemingly, cultivated good and cultivated evil can be cut off. Furthermore, Zhiyi neither separates nature from practice nor regards practice as acquired. As he says about the ten

---

[13] Zhanran, *Fahua wenju ji* 法華文句記, T34: 171a-b.

[14] Zhanran, *Jingang pei* 金剛錍, T46: 782c. "偏指清淨真如"

realms, "Where there is cultivated attainment, there is inherent virtue. Where there is inherent virtue, there is cultivated attainment."[15] What Zhiyi is saying is that cultivated attainment and inherent virtue mutually contain each other. Since cultivated attainment includes inherent virtue, cultivated attainment is not acquired but innate. To cut off the cultivated good and the cultivated evil does not imply that they no longer exist. It simply means they are no longer manifested. Zhiyi thus considers that all the good and all the evil of the ten realms never disappear. As he says, "They are hidden (*ming fu* 冥伏) in the mind. Although they do not manifest, they are completely as they are."[16]

Zhanran asserts the non-duality of nature and practice in his *Ten Gates of Non-duality* (*Shi bu er men* 十不二門). He says,

> "It is through practice that nature is illuminated, and it is through nature that practice is manifested. When it comes to nature, the entire realm of practice (all phenomenal manifestation) is nature (*quan xiu chen xing* 全修成性). When practice manifests, the entire nature is the practice (*quan xing chen xiu* 全性成修). Nature never changes and the practice is always as it is."[17]

For Zhanran, nature and practice are two sides of one coin. Nature, i.e., inherent virtue, does not exist prior to practice (phenomenal manifestation) or the whole cultivated attainment. It is precisely because nature is composed of the entire practice that it can present itself as nature. Likewise, practice is not produced by nature. Rather, practice is composed of the entirety of nature, so it can present itself as practice (phenomenal manifestation). In other words, when manifesting, nature becomes practice. When it is not manifested but hidden in the mind, practice becomes nature. Both practice within

---

[15] Zhiyi, *Guanyin xuan yi* 觀音玄義, T34: 889a.

[16] Ibid., 888c.

[17] Zhanran, *Shi bu e men* 十不二門, T46: 703b. See also his *Fahua xuanyi shi qian* 法華玄義釋籤, T33: 918c.

nature as well as nature within practice never change. Zhanran's theory that "the entire practice is the nature and the entire nature is the practice" further explains Zhiyi's statement about "the cutting off cultivated good and cultivated evil." Both cultivated good and cultivated evil are hidden in nature as potentiality. Chuandeng would further expand on this notion of "non-duality of nature and practice."

Zhanran criticizes as dual Huayan's notion of "nature and practice." This is what the Song master Zhili (960-1028) says about Zanran:

> "Jingxi (Zhanran) said, 'the other schools do not understand practice and nature.' In Jingxi's time, many people advocated that the one principle of Suchness is 'nature' and the differentiated, [produced] when [Suchness] follows conditions, are the 'practice.' Therefore, the other schools' ultimate Round Teaching only discuss nature-origination and do not discuss nature-inclusion."[18]

According to Huayan, "nature" is unchanging and contain neither good nor evil. Good and evil arise only through "cultivated attainment" and are produced by nature while following conditions. Zhanran points out that this is a dualist understanding of Buddha-nature, for it separates nature from practice. This is very different from the non-dual inclusion advocated by the Tiantai school.

Zhanran broadens the idea that "Buddha-nature includes good and evil" by suggesting that insentient beings also have Buddha-nature. He uses this idea to reject the Huayan position that only sentient beings have Buddha-nature. Traditionally, insentient beings are considered as lacking the mind, so they do not have Buddha-nature, let alone become Buddhas. Contrarily, Zhanran maintains that insentient beings such as trees and stones also have Buddha-nature. This idea is found mainly in his *Diamond Scalpel* (*Jingang Pei* 金剛錍). Since Buddha-nature has the aspects of Conditioning Cause and

---

[18] Zhili, *Shi bu e men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 715b-c.

Revealing Cause which include all kinds of conditions and things, Buddha-nature must by necessity permeate all insentient beings. Therefore, there is no reason to claim that insentient beings do not have Buddha-nature.[19] It is fair to say that Zhanran advanced the Chinese Buddha-nature theory held by Daosheng and Zhiyi even further. As we recall, Daosheng believes that all icchantikas can become Buddhas and Zhiyi believes that Buddha-nature includes inherent evil. But neither speaks about Buddha-nature and insentient beings.

Like Zhiyi, Zhanran incorporated and adapted the prevailing thought of his time into Tiantai doctrine in order to strengthen and revitalize his own school. Andō Toshio regards Zhanran as the Tiantai thinker who introduced the first major innovation into Tiantai thought.[20] However, because he adopted the dynamics of "immutability" (*bubian*) and "following conditions" (*suiyuan*), two important ideas of the nature-origination thought, advocated by the Huayan school, he created the appearance of a closer tie between nature-inclusion and nature-origination. This resulted in some divergence of understanding among Tiantai followers and eventually set the stage for a schism in Tiantai with the emergence of the Shanjia 山家 and Shanwai 山外 branches during the Song dynasty.

Siming Zhili 四明知禮 (960-1028)

Siming Zhili lived about one hundred eighty years after Zhanran's death. During that

---

[19] Zhanran, *Jingang pei* 金剛錍, T46: 784b.

[20] Andō, *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* 天台性具思想論, 130.

time Tiantai would decline and find itself in a second "dark age."[21] This is because most Tiantai scriptures were lost after the Huichang 會昌 persecution (845) in the late-Tang and in the turmoil of war during the Five Dynasties (907-979). Without scriptures, the general knowledge of Tiantai doctrine declined drastically.[22] It was with the help of Emperor Qian Chu 錢俶 (929-988) of the Wuyue 吳越 kingdom that Tiantai scriptures were recovered from Korea, but, by this time, the study of Tiantai doctrine resulted in diverse and diverging understandings. Huayan and Chan schools had continued to flourish. Moreover, as we have read above, Huayan in particular exerted much influence on Tiantai.

Zhanran's incorporation of certain elements of Huayan thought resulted in misunderstandings among Tiantai adherents. Zhanran accepted the idea of "Suchness that follows conditions," and eventually many Tiantai followers tended toward the Huayan doctrine thus starting a slow merging of Tiantai with Hauyan[23] that threatened the very existence of Tiantai itself. Zhili saw this merging as a crisis and embarked on an almost solitary mission to save Tiantai from disappearing altogether. Proclaiming himself to be Tiantai orthodoxy, Zhili initiated an intense debate thus creating a schism among the Tiantai that lasted nearly thirty years.[24] He would shun those who tended toward the Huayan and they would eventually be known as the Shanwai (outside the [Tiantai] mountain) , while those who agreed with Zhili, the self-proclaimed defender of orthodoxy, would be known as the Shanjia (home mountain). But, for most of the time Zhili was the

---

[21] Ibid., 160.

[22] Zongjian, *Shi men zhengtong* 釋門正統, X75: 278b.

[23] Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 196.

[24] Chen, "Chili (960-1028) and the Crisis of the T'ien-t'ai Buddhism in the Early Sung," 409.

sole adherent of his own orthodoxy. His vigorous defense of what he considered to be the true doctrine helped clarify and revive Tiantai, thus saving it from extinction.

Zhili's uncompromising approach in separating Huayan from Tiantai was embodied in his extensive development of "inherent evil." Following in Zhanran footsteps, Zhili regarded the teaching of "inclusion" and its characteristic feature of "inherent evil" as representing Tiantai Buddhism. In his words,

> "Just this one single word—inclusion (*ju* 具)—clearly reveals[the doctrine of] our school. The masters of other schools also know that the Buddha-nature includes good, but none of them know that [Buddha-nature] as Conditioning Cause and as Revealing Cause also includes evil."[25]

Doctrinally, Zhili reasserts Tiantai's superiority as the supreme Round Teaching[26] over Huayan precisely because of this idea of inclusion. The Shanwai faction regards both the Huayan and the Tiantai equally as the Round Teaching[27] because both claim "Suchness that can follow conditions." Zhili regards this view to be wrong and wants to draw clear distinctions between the two. He points out that the Round Teaching is not about "Suchness that can follow conditions" but about "nature-inclusion." He says, "It does not matter whether or not [Suchness can] follow conditions. If [the teaching] is not about essence-inclusion (nature-inclusion), then it is still the Separate Teaching."[28] Zhili disparages the teachings that are only about "following conditions" without the aspect of "inclusion," describing such teachings as the "'following conditions' of the Separate Teaching" (*bie li sui yuan* 別理隨緣) or as the "understanding principle only by cutting

---

[25] Zhili, *Quanyin xuan yi ji* 觀音玄義記, T34: 905a.

[26] Zhili, *Shi bu e men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 712c.

[27] Zhipan, *Fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀, T49: 192b. See also Zhili's *Bie li sui yuan er shi wen* 別理隨緣二十問, collected in *Siming zunzhe jiao xing lu* 四明尊者教行錄, T46: 874c.

[28] Zhili, *Shi bu e men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 715c.

off the nine realms" teaching (*yuan li duan jiu* 緣理斷九). In other words, the "Suchness that follows conditions" that does not include in itself both the good and the evil of the nine realms is simply the Exclusive Middle of the Separate Teaching. We read:

> "Because that teaching is not about 'nature that includes the nine other realms' then it is just the principle of Exclusive [Middle] which can follow conditions and give rise to the nine realms. If one cuts off the ignorance [to become a Buddha], the nine realms must be destroyed. If all the nine realms are Suchness as principle, why do the nine realms need to be cut off?"[29]

Zhili criticizes the Huayan teaching for separating the pure Buddha realm from the nine defiled realms. Zunshi 遵式 (964～1032), a Tiantai scholar monk and contemporary of Zhili, holds the same view:

> "The Buddha-nature taught by Tiantai differs from other schools. Most others consider the one only principle of Suchness as the Buddha-nature, but only Tiantai perfectly speaks of the Buddha-nature including the ten realms."[30]

In order to point out that the Shanwai faction has misunderstood Zhanran's adoption of the essence/function relationship, Zhili states that essence and function are identical. Reasserting Zhanran's view, Zhili says, "Principle includes Three Thousand, all [the Three Thousand] are called essence. Phenomenal activities include Three Thousand which are all called function. Therefore, all are essence, all are function." In terms of essence, he turns to Zhanran's idea of "the principle includes Three Thousand worlds" (*li ju san qian* 理具三千) to maintain that Suchness as principle inherently contains all the good and the evil of the ten realms when it **does not** follow conditions. And, in terms of function, he confirms that "the phenomenal manifestations contain the Three Thousand worlds" (*shi zao san qian* 事造三千), and as a function of Suchness, "phenomenal

---

[29] Zhili, *Siming zunzhe jiao xing lu* 四明尊者教行錄, T46: 876a.

[30] Zunshi, *Tianzhu bie ji* 天竺別集, X57: 39a.

activities" **do not** change their nature and always include all the good and the evil when Suchness **does** follow conditions. Accordingly, both principle and phenomena are identical to each other and both are not only essence but also function.[31] Zhili says that principle is exactly the inherent good and the inherent evil and when they manifest as phenomenal activity, they are the cultivated good and the cultivated evil.[32] Further strengthening Zhanran's position, Zhili emphasizes that essence and function include the "Three Thousand Worlds" and that essence and function are mutually included in and identical to each other, a position that differs entirely from the "pure mind as Suchness" position held by the Huayan thinkers.

Zhili particularly focuses on the idea of "identity" (*ji* 即) to explain inherent evil, thereby upholding Tiantai as the Round Teaching and differentiating it from the Separate Teaching of Huayan. He says:

> "When [we] examine how the other schools explain 'idntity,' their position is untenable because they regard the fruit of Buddha as the *only* Suchness. They need to destroy all the differentiated nine realms in order to return to the one and only nature of the Buddha realm. … If all the Three Thousand Worlds are inherent virtues, then none of the nine realms need to be destroyed, they are identical to the Dharma of the Buddha [realm]. Thus, identity is established and the principle in the Round Teaching is manifested."[33]

For Zhili, "identity" means that the Buddha-realm and the nine other realms are identical to each other. In other words, Suchness as Buddha-nature inherently contains the nine realms as inherent evil, a point on which he insists throughout his argument with the Shanwai and the Huayan understanding.

---

[31] Zhili, *Shi bu e men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 715b, 716a.

[32] Zhili, *Siming shi yi shu* 四明十義書, T46: 841a.

[33] Zhili, *Shi bu e men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 715b.

Turning to the methods of practice, "identity" is the framework for Zhili's development of the Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil:

> "It should be known that the 'identity' our school understands is forever different from that of the others. It is neither the combination of two objects nor the reversing of two sides of something. Rather, it is called "identical" because the present entity must be entirely [the other]. Why? Since afflictions and saṁsāra are cultivated evil, their whole present substance must be the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Thus, there is no need to cut off and turn them over. The other schools do not understand inherent evil, so they reverse evil into good and cut off evil to reach good. Even those who claims to be of the utmost Sudden Teachings still say, 'Inherently there is no evil [in the nature] and originally it is good.' Since the whole [cultivated] evil can not be the [inherent] evil, their meaning of 'identity' is untenable."[34]

Zhili's point is that **"cultivated evil is identical to inherent evil"** (*xiu e ji xing e* 修惡即性惡). As Brook Ziporyn says, "Here Zhili emphasizes the importance of inherent evil and mutual inclusion as the signature of the Tiantai school."[35] Unlike Zhiyi, Zhili intensifies his focus on inherent evil as Buddha-nature. There is no need to cut off or reverse evil to pursue the good; simply by realizing cultivated evil in its "present entity" as identical to inherent evil is to realize the Buddha-nature. Cutting off afflictions is to see afflictions and enlightenment as two different entities. Thus, nirvāna is outside of samsāra. Reversing afflictions into enlightenment is to see afflictions as function and enlightenment as essence, implying that the pure Buddha-nature alone is nirvāna and that it excludes the nine other realms caused by the deluded mind. Both cutting and reversing afflictions exclude evil from Buddha-nature and deny the "present entity" (*dang ti* 當體) itself as Buddha-nature. For Zhili, any cultivated evil of the nine realms in its "present entity" is identical to inherent evil, and inherent evil itself *is* Buddha-nature. Thus, "cultivated evil is identical to inherent evil" is Zhili's Dharma-gate of inherent evil. In a

---

[34] Ibid.,707a.

[35] Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 271.

later chapter, I shall show how Chuandeng, based on this very same point, developed his own version of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.

Following Zhiyi's approach to contemplation, both Zhili and the Shanwai faction agree on the centrality of contemplation of mind (*guan xin* 觀心), but disagree on how to do it. The Shanwai insist that the pure "True Mind" (*zhen xin* 真心) without good and evil is the object of contemplation in revealing the Buddha-nature. Zhili, on the other hand, regards the impure "Deluded Mind" (*wang xin* 妄心) to be the object of contemplation because Buddha-nature is identical to it. To discover Buddha-nature in any one thought of the deluded mind in daily life is the easiest and most feasible way toward Buddhahood.

To directly oppose the Shanwai's position that "True Mind can become tathāgata (Buddha)" (*zhen xin zao ru lai* 真心造如來), Zhili proclaims that "Deluded Mind can become tathāgata" (*wang xin zao ru lai* 妄心造如來). Zhili critizes the Shanwai for not allowing for the deluded mind to become Buddha because they do not know the "antagonistic seed" (*di dui zhong* 敵對種), which is a rewording of Zhiyi's "opposite seed." Opposite seeds are the evil seeds that can lead to the good of Buddhahood. Parallel seeds are the good seeds that can lead to the good of Buddhahood. In Zhili's view, the Shanwai only know that Buddha-nature can manifest by its parallel "True Mind" but not by its opposing "Deluded Mind." Thus, the identity of samsāra and nirvāna as understood by the Shanwai does not convey Reality. They only know identity in name but not in its true meaning. For Zhili, only the Tiantai school reveals the true meaning of the identity of

afflictions and enlightenment and that of samsāra and nirvāna.[36]

Zhili not only defines "identity" by "inherent evil" but also proposes a unique idea, namely, the "Poison of principle is identical to inherent evil" (*li du ji xing e* 理毒即性惡). This is another important point of contention between the Shanwai faction and Zhili. The "poison of principle" (*li du* 理毒) is one of the three poisons (evil) proposed to be eliminated by Zhiyi. The first poison is the "poison of phenomena" (*shi du* 事毒), or the evils that one may encounter in real life, such as attacks by a tiger or sword. The second one is the "poison of action" (*xing du* 行毒), or the evils of affliction and delusion that trap one in saṁsāra. These two are easy to understand. However, the third one, the "poison of principle," defined by Zhiyi as "the undefiled itself is also defilement; this is the poison of principle–nature" (*wu ran er ran ji li xing zhi du* 無染而染, 即理性之毒).[37] This is understood differently by the Shanwai and Shanjia factions and becomes a bone of contention between the two.

For Shanwai, the poison is not inherently possessed by the undefiled principle-nature. The entire principle-nature becomes the defiled poison after it is combined with ignorance and is thus called the poison of principle.[38] In order to return to nature, the poison should be cut off. Shanwai thus argues that the "poison of principle" does not mean "inherent evil" by nature. Zhili belittles this view as the Separate Teaching and argues against it, saying that "this meaning of identity is untenable, so it cannot be called the poison that is identical to the principle-nature. Thus, it belongs to the Separate

---

[36] Zhili, *Siming shi yi shu* 四明十義書, T46: 846c.

[37] Zhiyi, *Qing guanyin jing shu* 請觀音經疏, T39: 968a.

[38] Zhiyuan, *Qing guanyin jing shu chan yi chao* 請觀音經疏闡義鈔, T39: 978a.

Teaching."[39] Zhili asserts that the poison is exactly identical to inherent evil, which is the Round Teaching:

> "If the Dharma-realm (the principle) about which one is deluded inherently includes the three obstacles (affliction, karma, suffering). The three obstacles manifest because [the principle] is defiled. Defilement and delusion exist dependently (inherently in the principle), so poison and harm are uncreated. When returning to nature, defilement and poison are still there as always. Only this meaning of identity is tenable. Thus it is called 'the poison that is identical to the principle-nature.' This view belongs to the Round Teaching. … If the teaching does not talk about 'inclusion,' it is called the Separate Teaching. Therefore we know that because of 'inherent evil,' we can say 'the poison that is identical to the principle.'"[40]

Zhili points out that poison is originally possessed by the principle-nature itself and that the principle-nature in the undefiled condition remains defiled. Poison means inherent evil and poison in its present entity is Reality.[41]

Zhili's idea of the Poison of Principle represents a new phase in Tiantai philosophy. For him, the poison itself is what can destroy the poison. Both the destroyer and the destroyed are identical:

> "Since the poison is identical to the nature, the poison itself is that which has the ability to destroy [the poison]. Since the poison is that which can destroy poison, it is absolute in its present entity—then who can say that there is the destroyer and the destroyed."[42]

This form of destruction is not based on the relativity of subject and object or on the separation of essence and function. Rather, it is based on the identity of nature and practice. Using the poison to destroy poison embodies the absolute meaning of identity in the idea of nature-inclusion. Andō Toshio praises this thinking as "the highest

---

[39] Zhili, *Siming zunzhe jiao xing lu* 四明尊者教行錄, T46: 872c.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 891c

[42] Ibid., 872c.

accomplishment in Tiantai nature-inclusion philosophy."[43] It reflects Zhili's "Contemplation of the Deluded Mind" (*wang xin quan* 妄心觀) which expresses that sentient beings need to actualize their practice in their deluded mind in daily life by showing the identity of poison and Buddha-nature.

Likewise, under the influence of the Buddhist intellectual background of his time, Zhili employed "identity" to explain "inherent evil" as the primary feature of nature-inclusion. Since the Sui-Tang periods, many schools held the idea that "affliction is identical to bodhi" or that "saṁsāra is identical to nirvāṇa."[44] Although their explanations on "identity" are different, they all use "identity" to express their highest teachings. For example, the Chan spoke of the identity of mind and Buddha (*ji xin ji li* 即心即佛), the Huayan discussed the identity of principle and phenomena (*ji shi ji li* 即事即理), and the Tiantai held the doctrine of the Six Identities of Buddha (*liu ji fo* 六即佛).

In terms of doctrine, the Huayan was the major doctrinal influence Zhanran had to face in the Tang. During the late Tang, Chan was merging with scriptural doctrine schools, especially with the Huayan teaching, and both became doctrinally more influential. By the early Song, Zhili not only had to face the infiltration of the Huayan teaching into Tiantai, but also the Chan school's criticisms of the Tiantai position on "the identity of affliction and bodhi." Some Shanwai believers thus followed the Chan thought. Zhili's

---

[43] Andō, *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* 天台性具思想論, 213.

[44] See, for example, *Platform sutra*, T48: 350b.; the sixth patriarch of Chan, Huineng, says, "Ordinary people are Buddhas. Affliction is the bodhi." Also see *Huayan jing shu* 華嚴經疏,T35: 619b.; the fourth patriarch of Huayan, Chengguan, says, " Believing that affliction is the bodhi can be said that [one's nature is] in eternal purity." Also see *Miao fa lian hua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 790a.; Zhiyi says, "The understanding that saṁsāra is nirvāṇa is thus called concentration. The realization that affliction is the bodhi is thus called wisdom." Also see *Fa hua xuan yi shi qian* 法華玄義釋籤, T33: 842c; Zhanran says, "When speaking of the nature, it means that affliction is the bodhi."

debates via correspondence with Chan monks give us an account of this.[45] The Shanwai position actually reflect both the Huayan and Chan teachings. For example, Zongmi 宗密 (780-841) and Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904-975), both promoted "the unity of Chan and scriptural teachings," and regarded Huayan thought as the highest doctrine. The fact that both Huayan and Chan take the pure True Mind as the Buddha-nature is indeed a serious threat to the Tiantai nature-inclusion thought. Zhili's hard-line debates with the Shanwai were in fact meant to purge both Huayan and Chan thoughts from Tiantai.

Like Zhanran, Zhili used the influential thought of his time to explain nature-inclusion on the one hand and, on the other hand, criticized the thought of other schools to elevate the status of Tiantai. While Zhanran accepted the idea of Suchness following conditions, Zhili took advantage of the term "identity" to forcefully reject the trend of the True Mind idea. By emphasizing "inherent evil" through "identity," Zhili drew a deep line between the Round teaching of Tiantai and the Separate Teaching of Huayan, Chan, and Shanwai.

Inherent evil is at the core of Zhili's thinking. He powerfully insisted that inherent evil is in Buddha-nature. Brook Ziporyn comments that, for Zhili, "there has never been a time when the pure essence was undefiled."[46] In fact, his theory on the poison of principle brought the Tiantai nature-inclusion thought to new heights and influenced later Tiantai thinkers. Thus Zunshi, a friend of Zhili, said this about him:

---

[45] The correspondence between Zhili and Chan monk Zining 子凝, the abbot of Tiantong monastery reflects this issue and the letters are collected in *Siming zunzhe jiao xing lu* 四明尊者教行錄. See, for example, T46: 895c-896a. This issue can also be found in *Shi bu e men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 707a-b.

[46] Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 232.

"There is no double moon in the sky. There is only this one monk in this world."[47]

Huxi Huaize 虎溪懷則 (fl. 1310)

Huxi Huaize lived in the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), nearly three hundred years after Zhili. He was the next notable Tiantai monk whose thought influenced Chuandeng. Scant historical records exist about Huaize's life and death. Of Huaize's two extant works, only one is dated with the year 1310, *The Essential Way of Pure Land Contemplation* (*Jingtu jing guan yao men* 淨土境觀要門),[48] and the other, the *Record of Tiantai's Transmission of the Buddha's Mind-seal* (*Tiantai chuan fo xinyin ji* 天台傳佛心印記), was written during the early Yuan.[49]

The defeat of the Song marked another serious blow to Chinese Buddhism. With the loss of scriptures again during the wars of dynastic change, Tiantai, like Huayan, had a setback in the Yuan. Even though Tibetan Buddhism played an important religious role in the Mongolian Yuan government, Chan and Pure Land practices remained relatively popular among the common people. While the Pure Land gradually focused on ritual and lay religious association activities,[50] the Chan school had influence among the monastic order, threatening the survival of Tiantai. Although Zhili's thought helped keep Tiantai doctrine relevant for a period of time, by the end of the Song dynasty it was slowly disappearing from the Buddhist landscape again. This is because, since the Song, the

---

[47] Zhili, *Siming zunzhe jiao xing lu* 四明尊者教行錄, T46: 918c.

[48] Huaize, *Jingtu jing guan yao men* 淨土境觀要門, T47: 291c.

[49] Chuandeng, *Tiantai chuan fo xinyin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註, X57: 351b.

[50] Pan, *Zhongguo Tiantai zong tong shi* 中國天台宗通史, 689-91.

Chan school had continually claimed the legitimacy of its lineage and looked down upon the Tiantai teachings. This was a challenge for Tiantai. For example, Qisong 契嵩 (1007-1072), in his *Record of the Transmission of the Dharma in the True School* (*Chuan fa zhen zong ji* 傳法正宗記), asserted that Chan was "the separate transmission outside the scriptures" (*jiao wai bie chuan* 教外別傳)—the transmission of the Buddha's Mind-seal—and regarded Chan as the legitimate teaching because it held the true lineage. He thereby disparaged the Tiantai lineage and teaching for being based on scripture. Tiantai monk Zhipan 志磐 (fl. 13th century), wrote *A Chronicle of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs* (*fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀) to combat the criticisms, stressing the orthodoxy of the Tiantai lineage and scriptural teaching.[51] Furthermore, as Chan continued to expand during the Yuan, Guoqing monastery, the headquarters of the Tiantai school, became a Chan monastery,[52] making Tiantai's survival that much more difficult. Under these trying circumstances, Huaize wrote the *Record of Tiantai's Transmission of the Buddha's Mind-seal* as a treatise against Chan in an effort to restore the Tiantai tradition.

The Record of Tiantai's Transmission of the Buddha's Mind-seal is representative of Huaize's thinking on inherent evil. Like his predecessors, he responded to the major Buddhist thought of his time by both absorbing and criticizing it. On the one hand, he rejected the "transmission of the Buddha's Mind-seal" (*chuan fo xinyin* 傳佛心印) of Chan. On the other hand, he would make "inherent evil" the Buddha's Mind-seal to legitimize Tiantai. Although Huaize did not create any new theory, his thought can be

---

[51] Ibid., 655-7. See also Xinhaofashi, *Tiantai jiao zhi shi* 天台教制史, 355-6.

[52] Pan, *Zhongguo Tiantai zong tong shi* 中國天台宗通史, 706. See also Xinhaofashi, *Tiantai jiao zhi shi* 天台教制史, 353, 357.

regarded as the height of Tiantai Buddhism in the Yuan.

Huaize begins his work with, "Today, the achievement of the nature-inclusion thought lies in inherent evil."[53] Just as Zhili sees the idea of inherent evil through Zhanran's lens, Huaize interprets it through Zhili's understanding. He reasserts Zhili's claim that "cultivated evil is identical to inherent evil" and emphasizes the importance of "identity:"

> "When the interpenetration of inherent evil with everything is understood, there is no dharma it cannot reach. Thus it spontaneously reaches the inherent good of the Buddha realm. Since cultivated evil is identical to inherent evil, the cultivated evil can not be destroyed and the inherent evil can not be revealed. It must be that the whole [cultivated] evil is the [inherent] evil to make the meaning of 'identity' tenable."[54]

Following Zhili, he stresses not only that cultivated evil cannot be cut off in order to become a Buddha but also that it must be through inherent evil that Buddha-nature is to be realized.

Most importantly, he wants to establish that inherent evil is the Mind-seal, the final teaching that the Buddha transmitted to sentient beings. He demonstrates that inherent evil is not an idea created by Tiantai out of nowhere, but an idea based on the sutras. Huaize points out that this idea is found universally throughout all the Mahāyāna sutras. He refers to the sentence "Suchness that follows the defiled and pure conditions which then become the ten dharma-realms" purportedly found in the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* as evidence that Buddha-nature contains the ten realms.[55] In the *Lotus Sutra*, which explains that "all dharmas are Reality," he finds supporting evidence that the evil of the

---

[53] Huaize, *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記, T46: 934a.

[54] Ibid., 934a-b.

[55] Ibid., 934b. Attributed to the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, this citation is actually from Bensong's *Zhu huayan jing ti fa jie guan men song* 註華嚴經題法界觀門頌, T45: 701b.

nine realms and the good of the Buddha realm are included in Reality. Moreover, he argues that the *Mahā-parinirvāna-sūtra*, through the Three Causes of Buddha-nature, illustrates that both icchantikas and Buddhas possess inherent good and inherent evil. He also refers to the "poison and harm" (*du hai* 毒害) mentioned in *The Sutra of the Dhāraṇī That Invokes Avalokiteśvara to Dissipate Poison and Harm* (*qing guan shi yin xiao fu du hai tuo luo ni jing* 請觀世音消伏毒害陀羅尼經) as more proof for inherent evil.[56] Among these, it was the "inherent evil" concept, as discussed in the *Lotus Sutra*, that was most valued by Huaize, regarding it as "the final ultimate teachings that is the Mind-seal that Buddhas authentically transmit."[57] As he sees it, inherent evil, i.e., the nature-inclusion thought, as the Buddha's Mind-seal has scriptural authority, especially the authority from the *Lotus Sutra*.

Huaize proves the Tiantai lineage by confirming that Tiantai history is the history of the transmission of inherent evil. He uses Tiantai's style of categorizing the Indian and Chinese lineages. Roughly translated, the Indian lineage is called "The Inheritance of the Golden Mouth" (*jin kou zu cheng* 金口祖承), and the Chinese lineage is called "The Inheritance of the Present Master Patriarch" (*jin shi zu cheng* 今師祖承).[58] In Chinese Buddhism, the legitimacy of the Indian lineage always leads to the legitimacy of the

---

56 Huaize, *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記, T46: 934b.

57 Ibid., 935b.

58 In Tiantai tradition, the Indian linage is labeled "*jin kou zu cheng*" 金口祖承, "[the doctrine of] the Golden Mouth as transmitted through a succession of patriarchs." The Golden Mouth indicates that the doctrine was given by the Buddha personally. Its Chinese lineage is labeled "*jin shi zu cheng*" 今師祖承, "[the doctrine of the Buddha] was transmitted through the Chinese patriarchs." Zhiyi's disciple Guanding 灌頂 started this Tiantai lineage tradition. See *Mohe zhi guan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 1a-b. The later Tiantai thinkers then followed Guanding. See, for example, Zhanran, *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, T46: 145a. Also see Zhipan, *Fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀, T49: 130a.

Chinese lineage. Huaize, just as Zhiyi's disciple Guanding 灌頂 (561-632) did, argues that the legitimacy of the Indian lineage is found in the *Account of the Transmission of the Dharma Treasury* (*fu fa zang yin yuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳), in which are recorded the stories of the twenty-four Indian patriarchs. Further, he holds that the Buddha transmitted inherent evil as the true Mind-seal to Mahā-kāśyapa because he believes it is told in the *Lotus Sutra* and thus it was passed on from one patriarch to another up to the twenty-fourth Indian patriarch. Thus, he asserts that both the Tiantai lineage and inherent evil have scriptural legitimacy. Accordingly, he denies both the Indian lineage and the Mind-seal of Chan by holding that both have no scriptural legitimacy.

"The transmission of the Buddha's Mind-seal" 傳佛心印 is an original Chan term. Chan believes that the mind of sentient beings inherently possess the "pure mind" of Buddhas and, by realizing one's own mind, one can "see into one's nature and attain Buddhahood" (*jian xing cheng fo* 見性成佛).[59] This realization cannot be expressed by language. It can only be directly approved or sealed by the mind of an enlightened one. It is in this way that the "pure mind" as the Mind-seal was first transmitted by the Buddha to Mahā-kāśyapa. This refers to the famous Chan story in which the Buddha held up a flower and Mahā-kāśyapa smiled and in that instant he received the Buddha's Mind-seal. The Mind-seal was thus transmitted from mind to mind all the way to Bodhidharma, the twenty-eighth Indian patriarch, who then came to China and became the first patriarch of the Chan school thus continuing the transmission of this Mind-seal. This way of handing down the Buddhadharma is called "the separate transmission outside the scriptures" 教

---

[59] See, for example, Muan 睦庵, *Zu ting shi yuan* 祖庭事苑, X64: 424c. The Chan school claims that, "The Mind-seal: Bodhidharma came from the west. [He] did not depend on words and speech and singly transmitted the Mind-seal. [His teaching] directly points to the mind. Seeing into one's nature, then one attains Buddhahood."

外別傳.

Huaize criticizes Chan for claiming that they have twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, because the last four Indian patriarchs were actually groundlessly added to what Huaize considers to be the legitimate twenty–four patriarchs as recorded in the *Account of the Transmission of the Dharma Treasury*. He also denounces the Chan concept that the transmission of the Mind-seal from the Buddha to Mahā-kāśyapa are without scriptural authority.[60] Consequently, he denies not only the unique way of the transmission of Chan Buddhism but also the Chan lineage itself. By replacing "pure mind" with "inherent evil" as the Mind-seal, he thereby justifies the Tiantai lineage.

He also uses "inherent evil" to explain the Chinese lineage and history of Tiantai. Zhiyi's thought can be traced back to Huiwen 慧文 (fl. 6th century) and Huisi 慧思 (515-577). Huaize holds that Huiwen, the first Chinese patriarch of Tiantai, received the Mind-seal from Nāgārjuna, the thirtieth Indian patriarch, because it was through Nāgārjuna's works that Huiwen was awakened to Nāgārjuna's teachings. Huiwen transmitted his understanding to Huisi and then Huisi realized the *Lotus Sutra* and passed his realization on to Zhiyi. Zhiyi demonstrated that the essence of the *Lotus Sutra* was nature-inclusion thought and it was passed down to Zhanran who revived the thought in the Tang. When the Tiantai texts were recovered during the Five Dynasties, the inherent evil idea was passed down again by Tiantai thinkers all the way to Zhili. Zhili forcefully revived the teaching, developing the inherent evil idea to its fullest extent. Huaize praises him by saying that "Zhili revived this Way. Just as the bright sunlight in the sky, it cannot

---

[60] Huaize, *Tiantai Chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記, T46: 935b.

be covered up."[61] Huaize thereby asserts Inherent Evil to be the Mind-seal and the highest teaching of Buddhism.

To further highlight inherent evil as the supreme Buddhist teaching, Huaize compares Zhili's idea with those of other schools. Following in Zhili's footsteps, Huaize criticizes Huayan's nature-origination idea for only knowing inherent good but not knowing inherent evil. He also opposes the Chan concept of the pure mind as the Mind-seal. He points out that this concept is not consistent with Zhili's idea "to become Buddha by the deluded mind." Rather, it is a concept of " to become a Buddha by true mind." Neither position carries the meaning of "identity" because they only prove that bodhi is bodhi and deny that *affliction* is bodhi. Since the deluded mind is not identical to the true mind, the positions of both Huayan and Chan remain the Separate Teaching.[62]

Furthermore, he claims that "inherent evil is a different name for Buddha-nature," With this, he refutes the position that "icchantikas cannot become Buddhas" as held by the Character school (*xiang zong* 相宗) as well as the position that "insentient beings do not have Buddha-nature" as held by the Nature school (*xing zong* 性宗).[63] The Character school believes that the unchanging Suchness *cannot* follow conditions, thus the afflictions of sentient beings of the nine realms and the Buddha-nature are completely separate from Suchness. For Huaize, this position is wrong because it ignores the idea that the deluded mind also possesses Buddha-nature, so it holds that "icchantikas cannot

---

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 935c.

[63] The Character school 相宗, a name that applies to the position that only deals with the phenomenal appearances, especially to the Faxiang school. The Nature school 性宗, in contrast to the Character school, is a name loosely applied to the position that deals with the underlying "nature" of all phenomenal appearances and is connected to schools other than Faxiang. Huaize refers to Faxing when mentioning the Character school, and to Huayan and Chan when mentioning the Nature school.

become Buddhas.” In addition, although the Nature school believes that all sentient beings can become Buddhas, it separates the “insentient beings” of the nine realms from the Buddha-nature. Therefore, it holds that “insentient beings do not have Buddha-nature,” an idea held by the Huayan. For Huaize, both positions do not know that all the dharmas of the nine realms are included in Buddha-nature. In other words, they do not know that all the cultivated evils, i.e., the nine realms, whether sentient beings or insentient beings, have inherent evil. They also do not know that inherent evil, which contains all dharmas of the ten realms, is a different name for Buddha-nature. That is, all the cultivated evils are Buddha-nature. Both positions stand on the wrong view that one needs to cut off the cultivated evil of the nine realms in order to reveal the inherent good of the Buddha realm. By directly identifying “inherent evil” as Buddha-nature, Huaize emphasizes the importance of inherent evil in realizing Buddha-nature.[64]

Huaize believes that the purpose of the transmission of the Mind-seal is to help sentient beings return to this nature of inherent good and inherent evil. Huaize thereby attacks the Chan school. He dismisses the possibility of the single transmission (*dan chuan* 單傳) claimed by the Chan which means that there is only one representative in each generation at the beginning of the lineage. He points out that since the Buddha transmitted the Mind-seal for the sake of sentient beings to return to their true nature, the Buddha must have instructed his disciples to extensively spread the Mind-seal when he preached the *Lotus Sutra*. Huaize asserts that it was impossible for the Buddha to transmit the Mind-seal only to Mahā-kāśyapa with no one else knowing it. He insists that this single transmission is a lie and only serves to deceive people. He laments that the true

[64] Huaize, *Tiantai Chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記, T46: 935c-936a.

Mind-seal as inherent evil is " too rare and hard for people to comprehend."[65]

Upon Zhiyi's establishment of the idea that nature includes good and evil, its development varied over time. In the Tang, Zhanran absorbed the concept of unchanging Suchness that can follow the conditions. In the Song, Zhili reinterpreted Zhanran's theory through the idea of "identity." And, in the Yuan, Huaize defined inherent evil as Mind-seal. Against various intellectual backgrounds, not only did they all incorporate new elements to strengthen the Tiantai teaching, they also used their reinterpretations in the polemics against other schools to raise the status of Tiantai. As the leading Tiantai master in the late Ming, Chuandeng also continued this tradition to elevate Tiantai and to respond to the contemporary influential intellectual trend of his day.

---

[65] Ibid., 936c.

Chapter 5 The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Late-Ming Buddhism

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is at the core of Chuandeng's nature-inclusion thought and it was instrumental in his actions for the revival of Tiantai. Even though Chuandeng affirmed the centrality of the *Lotus Sutra* in the Tiantai doctrine, it was through the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* that he reached his initial enlightenment and, thereafter, made the ear-organ method his life-long practice. The sutra so influenced his thought that Chuandeng wrote four books and lectured sixteen times on the sutra. Moreover, he gave his monastery another name, Gaoming Śūraṃgama Teaching Monastary (*Gaoming lengyan Jiang si* 高明楞嚴講寺), proclaiming that, "What I hold and what I preach is the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[1] He was the first person to ever build a *Śūraṃgama* Altar following the sutra's specifications. Upon completion of the altar, every year until the day he died, he led a one-hundred day meditation retreat following the text's instructions. The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was at its apex in popularity among Buddhists and the cultured elites of the late Ming. During the seventy years of the late Ming, more commentaries were written about the sutra than in any other dynasty. According to the Qing dynasty scholar-monk Tongli 通理 (1701-1782), at least sixty-eight known commentaries were written between the time the sutra first appeared in the Tang and his time. Of these sixty-eight commentaries, thirty were written during the late Ming alone, more than the twenty written during the Song.[2] A more recent and more precise recounting confirms

---

[1] Chuandeng, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 73.

[2] Tongli, *Lengyan jing zhizhang shu xuan shi* 楞嚴經指掌疏懸示, X16: 9b-11a. Tongli's calculation is based on Qian Qianyi's 錢謙益 calculation which is recorded in his *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 503b-506b.

the new height in popularity the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* reached in the late Ming, showing that among the one hundred thirty-five commentaries written between the Tang and the Qing, a total of sixty appeared in the Ming, of which more than fifty were written in the late Ming alone.[3] Included among those who wrote commentaries in the late Ming were Buddhists, Confucians, and Daoists, demonstrating that the sutra was widely circulated among the intellectual elites. Indeed, during the late Ming, the doctrinal study of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was extremely popular among scholar-monks and the literati.[4] Together, they contributed significantly to the revival of Buddhism in the late Ming.

Much like his predecessors did in their efforts to promote Tiantai, Chuandeng used the prevailing ideas of his time, as represented in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, to respond to contemporary intellectual trends. In order to have a better understanding of Chuandeng's development and the revival of Tiantai thought, it is necessary to briefly explore why the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was influential to the revival of Buddhism in the late Ming.

An Introduction to the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* appeared in the mid-Tang period around the eighth century. First listed in the *Catalogue of Kaiyuan Era Buddhist Cannon* (*Kaiyuan shi jiao lu* 開元釋教錄)[5] compiled by Zhisheng in 730 CE, its full Chinese title is *Dafoding rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhu pusa wanxing shou lengyan jing* 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩

[3] Li, "Lengyan jing zhexue zhi yanjiu" 楞嚴經哲學之研究 (A Study on The Philosophy of the Shurangama Sutra), 158-165.

[4] Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, 25.

[5] T55: 571c.

萬行首楞嚴經.[6] Usually it is referred to as *Foding jing* 佛頂經, *Shou lengyan jing* 首楞嚴經, or *Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經. Another Buddhist canon catalogue compiled by Zhisheng listed Pramiti as the purported translator who translated it in 705 CE.[7] Modern scholars, however, generally regard the sutra's provenance as indigenous rather than Indian.[8] In fact, its origin and authenticity has been in question in China since the sutra appeared in the eighth century.[9] Nevertheless, the controversy has not affected its far-reaching influence on Chinese philosophy in general and Chinese Buddhism in particular. In fact, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is one of the four most commented upon texts in Chinese Buddhist scriptures.[10] As Robert H. Sharf notes, "Despite occasional doubts as to its authenticity, the *Shou-leng-yen ching* became one of the most popular Buddhist scriptures in China and was particularly influential within the Chan tradition."[11] This chapter will not repeat the discussions about the authenticity of the sutra. Rather, it will focus on its intellectual popularity in China, especially in the late Ming, which has been widely neglected by modern scholars.

Soon after the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* appeared in the Tang, it immediately caught the

---

[6] The Chinese title is "The Sūtra on the Śūraṅgama Mantra Spoken from above the Crown of the Great Buddha's Head, and on the Hidden Basis of the Tathagata's Myriad Bodhisattva Practices Leading to Their Verification of the Ultimate Truth." See *The Śūrangama Sūtra: A New Translation*, xxv.

[7] Zhisheng, *Xu gujin yijing tuji* 續古今譯經圖紀 (*A Continuation of the Illustrated Chronicle of the Translated Texts Past and Present*), T55: 371c-72a.

[8] For example, Mochizuki Shinko 望月信亨 points out that it was produced in China. See his *Jōdokyō no kigen oyobi hattatsu* 淨土教の起源及發達, 229-244. Also, Ronald B. Epstein wrote a detailed analysis on this issue. See his "The Śūraṅgama-sūtra with Tripiṭaka Master Hsuan-hua's Commentary 'An Elementary Explanation of Its General Meaning': A Preliminary Study and Partial Translation," 15-97.

[9] Ibid., 31-39.

[10] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* along with the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra* are the four most commented on sutras in the Chinese language. See Li, "Lengyan jing zhexue zhi yanjiu" 楞嚴經哲學之研究 (A Study on The Philosophy of the Shurangama Sutra), 34n9.

[11] Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 312.

attention of many monks and began to rise in popularity among the different Buddhist schools and the literati in the Song. By Chuandeng's time, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* had reached its apogee in popularity. Two major reasons can be ascribed to its popularity. First, Buddha-nature is discussed from the angle of mind-nature (*xin xing* 心性), which is how most Chinese Buddhist schools discuss Buddha-nature. Second, it is rich in Mahāyāna doctrine, which is in accordance with most teachings of the Chinese schools which are all Mahāyāna in their orientation. The sutra thus indicates the philosophical direction of the Chinese Buddhist schools as they became the dominant tradition during the Tang.

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* regards the pure "true mind" as Buddha-nature, based on the tathāgatagarbha doctrine that all sentient beings have the potential for Buddhahood. It discusses the relationship between "true mind" and "deluded mind," and especially how the deluded mind of sentient beings can return to the true mind of tathāgatagarbha. Although the sutra describes Buddha-nature as tathāgatagarbha having different names[12], it primarily points to the "true mind" that is inherent within sentient beings and that it is "originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm" (*qingjing benran zhoubian fajie* 清淨本然周遍法界), a line that Chuandeng would use throughout his explanation of nature-inclusion thought.

Written in ten fascicles, the sutra begins with the Buddha reciting the Śūraṃgama Mantra, and asks Mañjuśrī to use it to rescue Ānanda from succumbing to sexual seduction. Following this event, the teachings the Buddha gives to Ānanda compose the body of the sutra. In fascicles 1, 2 and 3, the differences between true mind and deluded

[12] For example, "bodhi, nirvāṇa, Suchness, Buddha-nature, amala-vijñāna, tathāgatagarbha in its emptiness, great perfect mirror wisdom." See *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 123c.

mind are analyzed in detail. In particular, Ānanda's answers to the Buddha's seven questions about where the true mind is represent the incorrect views sentient beings have regarding the mind. In Chinese Buddhism, this conversation is known as "the seven locations of mind-seeking" (*qi chu zheng xin* 七處徵心).[13] Within these fascicles, "the eight returnings for discerning the nature of seeing" (*ba huan bian jian* 八還辯見)[14] is also a well-known conversation about true mind. The tradition of encounter dialogue in Chan Buddhism is similar to the Buddha's interrogation of Ānanda in these conversations.[15] They are similar in that through the Buddha's interrogations, Ānanda is inspired to the realization of true mind, i.e., enlightenment.

Although the sutra expresses the difference between true mind and deluded mind, it also demonstrates that the true mind and the deluded mind are not two separate entities. Rather, it says that the deluded mind is originally the true mind.[16] By confusing one's true mind as an arising and ceasing phenomena, true mind becomes deluded. If one realizes that true mind is the source of all things and originally pure and everywhere, then the deluded mind and all phenomena will return to their original pure nature. The Huayan nature-origination philosophy is related to this concept. The Tiantai nature-inclusion

---

[13] T19: 107a-108b. Ānanda's incorrect answers are: 1) Inside the body 2) Outside the body 3) In the eye-faculty 4) When the eyes are closed, the mind can see the darkness of inside. When the eyes are open, the mind can see the light of outside. That is, the mind is inside the body but can only see the light through the openings of the body. 5) The mind comes into existence by uniting the sufficient causes regardless of its location. 6) In the middle of outside and inside. 7) Non-attachment is the mind.

[14] T19: 111a-111b. The sutra uses the nature of seeing to represent the true mind. The nature of seeing has the ability to see objects but has no original conditions to return to. Otherwise the mind is subject to arising and ceasing, just as the eight objects such as light, darkness, openings, obstruction, conditioning object, space, clearness, and obstacles can return to their original conditions.

[15] Encounter dialogue is a verbal or non-verbal encounter between an enlightened master and unenlightened disciple. The interrogation dialogue is usually the critical moment that pushes the disciple to contemplate the mind-nature to then become enlightened.

[16] See, for example, T19: 114a.

philosophy can likewise be connected to the idea of the non-duality of the deluded mind and the true mind as expressed in the sutra.

Fascicle 4 presents a theory for returning to the true mind. The entire illusory universe is considered the product of the deluded mind, i.e., the deluded functions of the six sense-organs.[17] The nature of the six sense-organs, however, is the same as the true mind. Accordingly, by choosing one sense-organ and purifying it, one can simultaneously purify and liberate all the six sense-organs, thus returning the deluded mind to the true mind. This is because all things are interpenetrating and the same as the true mind.[18]

Fascicles 5 and 6 propose twenty-five methods of practice for reaching the interpenetration of all things in order to return to the true mind. These methods include the practices by means of the six sense-organs, the six objects of the six sense-organs, and the seven elements.[19] Although the sutra claims that there is no difference among these practices, it considers that the most suitable practice for sentient beings is "the practice of interpenetration by means of ear-organ," the method practiced by Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara),[20] and also the life-long practice of Chuandeng. This method is the meditation practice by which the Śūraṃgama Samādhi is reached. Among these twenty-five practices, the Faxiang school's thought is connected to Maitreya bodhisattva's practice by means of consciousness. The Pure Land practice of repeating the name of Buddha is connected to Dashizhi 大勢至 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta) Bodhisattva's practice of interpenetration through Buddha-contemplation (*nianfo* 念

---

[17] T19: 122c. Six sense-organs are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

[18] T19: 123a.

[19] See chapter 7.

[20] T19: 130c.

佛).[21] As I will show in chapters seven and eight, Chuandeng incorporated the theory of the seven elements of this sutra within the Tiantai nature-inclusion thought and used the seven practices of the seven elements to explain the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.

From the second half of fascicle 6 through the end of fascicle 8, the preparatory practices considered necessary for the Śūraṃgama Samādhi are delineated. For example, it is important to practice the three learnings—discipline, meditation and wisdom—and to recite the Śūraṃgama Mantra.[22] Fascicles 9 and 10 are the guidelines for the meditation practice of the Śūraṃgama Samādhi itself, in which there is an analysis of the fifty demonic states produced by the deluded mind when meditating. Indeed, the doctrines of the Vinaya (discipline) school, Esoteric Buddhism[23], and Chan Buddhism can be linked to discipline, secret mantra, and meditation.

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* stresses Buddha-nature as "mind-nature" and different Chinese Mahāyāna schools have all found support for their teachings in the sutra's rich doctrines. Just as Shenyan says, "This sutra unites [the doctrines of] the different schools such as Chan, scriptural teachings, Vinaya, and Esoteric Buddhism. Also, it includes the Chan practice and the Pure Land tradition of recitation of the name of the Buddha. Moreover, it shows the consistency between the Nature [school] and the Character [school]."[24] Also as scholar Lu Cheng 呂澂 points out, "From the Song-Ming period onward, monks who discussed the profound doctrine and Confucians who refuted

---

[21] T19: 128a-b.

[22] T19: 133a-38b.

[23] Esoteric Buddhism generally refers to the secret mantra, contrasted with Exoteric Buddhism which generally refers to the manifest teachings of all the other Buddhist schools.

[24] Shengyan, *Ming mo zhongguo fo jiao zhi yan jiu* 明末中國佛教之研究, p.441.

Buddhism all referred to the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[25] This feature of blended teachings is rare to find in Chinese translated scriptures. It is exactly because of this feature that the sutra was upheld by different traditions, thus becoming one of the most influential sutras in China.

The Increasing Influence of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* from the Tang to the Mid-Ming

Soon after the sutra appeared in the Tang, as its teaching began to be adopted by several schools,[26] it was quickly incorporated by the Chan school. Chan master Wuzhu 無住 (714-774), the founder of the Baotang sect 保唐宗, was the first to abundantly quote the sutra to advocate the Chan doctrine.[27] The founders of later Chan sects such as Guishan 溈山 (771-853), Yangshan 仰山 (807-883), and Fayan 法眼 (885-958) were well versed in the sutra.[28] The first commentary, written by Weique 惟慤 (fl. 766), also came out soon after in 766.[29]

The increasing popularity of the sutra in the Song can be credited to two great

---

[25] Lu, "Lengyan bai wei" 楞嚴百偽, *Lu Cheng fo xue lun zhu xuan ji* 呂澂佛學論著選集, 370.

[26] "The practice of interpenetration of Buddha-contemplation" was cited by Feixi 飛錫 (fl. 742) to support the Pure Land teaching of the Samādhi of Buddha-contemplation (念佛三昧 *nianfo sanmei*). Vinaya monk Shencou 神湊 (743-817) said that he "dedicated himself to studying the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*." The Esoteric monk Chonghui 崇惠 (n.d.) was devoted to reciting the Śūraṃgama Mantra. See Zanning, *Song gao seng chuan* 宋高僧傳, T50: 807a, 816c.

[27] He cited the *Foding jing* 佛頂經 more than ten times in his *Li dai fa bao ji* 曆代法寶記. See, for example, T51: 187a,189b.

[28] The five sects of Chan are Linji 臨濟, Guiyan 溈仰, Caodong 曹洞, Fayan 法眼 and Yunmen 雲門. Guishan and Yangshan were praised for their ability to speak eloquently about the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. See Zeng Fengyi 曾鳳儀, *Lengyan jing zong tong* 楞嚴經宗通, X16: 893c. Fayan used the "eight returnings" to interrogate his disciple Wensui 文遂 who deeply studied the sutra. See Wenyi, *Jinling qingliangyuan wenyi chanshi yulu* 金陵清涼院文益禪師語錄, T47: 591b-c.

[29] Zanning, *Song gao seng chuan* 宋高僧傳, T50: 738c.

Buddhist thinkers, Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780-841) of the late Tang and Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904-975) of the Five-dynasties. Zongmi, as a Huayan and Chan patriarch, frequently cited the teachings of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* in his commentaries to interpret *The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* (*Yuan jue jing* 圓覺經), the text on which his core thought was based.[30] He also regarded the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the ultimate teaching and used it to uphold "the unity of Chan and scriptural teaching."[31] Likewise, Chan monk, Yanshou, abundantly cited the sutra in his main work, *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄 (*The Records of the Source-Mirror*), to advocate "the unity of Chan and scriptural teaching."[32]

In the Song, there was an increase of exegetical commentaries about the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, many of which were written by Huayan, Tiantai, and Chan thinkers. Huayan monk, Changshui Zixuan 長水子璿 (965-1038), who revived the Huayan school by spreading the sutra, was honored as "the grand master of Lengyan"[33] because of his commentary *Lengyan yi shu* 楞嚴義疏.[34] His disciple Jinshui Jingyuan 晉水淨源 (1011-1088) wrote the first liturgy influenced by the sutra, *Shoulengyan tanchang xiuzheng yi* 首楞嚴壇場修證儀.[35] Since then, the doctrine and the practice of the

---

[30] For example, see his two commentaries, *Yuanjue jing da shu* 圓覺經大疏, X9: no. 243, and *Yuanjue jing da shu yi chao* 圓覺經大疏釋義鈔, X9: no. 245.

[31] See his *Chan yuan zhu quan ji du xu* 禪源諸詮集都序, T48: 405a.

[32] See Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 503c. Yanshou's *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄 is collected in T48. no. 2016.

[33] See Huaiyan 懷遠, *Lengyan jing yi shu shi yao chao* 楞嚴經義疏釋要鈔. X11: 79c. Also see Minghe 明河, *Bu xu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳, X77: 374c.

[34] T39: no. 1799.

[35] See X74: no.1477.

Śūraṃgama Sūtra have played important roles in the Huayan school.

A legend reflecting the great esteem Tiantai monks had for the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* in the Song said that, in the sixth century, Zhiyi foretold the future arrival of the sutra.[36] Although the Tiantai monk, Zongjian 宗鑑 (d. 1206), denied this story, he nevertheless agreed that the doctrine of the sutra was consistent with the Tiantai teaching.[37] Indeed, both Zhili 知禮 (960-1028) and Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032), the two most important Tiantai monks of the Song, employed the sutra to support their thought.[38] Among the commentaries by Tiantai monks, those by Gushan Zhiyuan 孤山智圓 (976-1022) and Renyue Jingjue 仁岳淨覺 (992-1064) became well known at that time.[39] Jingue also wrote a liturgy based on the sutra, the *Li song yi* 禮誦儀, a repentance ritual that was incorporated into the overall Tiantai practice. He was probably the first to institute the Śūraṃgama Mantra into the monastic's morning and evening services.[40]

In the Song, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was called "the marrow of Chan"[41] and became

---

[36] See Juefan 覺範, *Lin jian lu* 林間錄, X87: 264a.

[37] See his *Shi men zheng tong* 釋門正統, X75: 317c.

[38] For example, Zhili cited the sutra as *Foding jing* 佛頂經 in *Miao zong chao* 妙宗鈔 and *Siming zunzhe jaoxing lu* 四明尊者教行錄. See T37: 220b. and T46: 893a. Zunshi has a famous story called "Lengyan san guan" (楞嚴三關 Three Passes of Lengyan) that he used three questions of the sutra to test an official who asked Zunshi to approve his commentary on the sutra. See Zhipan, *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, T49: 208c.

[39] Zhiyuan's *Jingshu* 經疏 and *Guxiang chao* 谷響鈔 and Jingjue's *Huijie* 會解 and *Xunwen ji* 熏聞記 had great influence on later generations. See Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 504a. Also see Zhipan, *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, T49: 241b-c. They used the Tiantai practice of cessation and contemplation (Skt. *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*; Ch. *zhi* and *guan* 止觀) to interpret the sutra. See the explanation for calming and contemplation in Neal Donner and Daniel B. Stevenson's *The Great Calming and Contemplation*. p.8.

[40] See his *Lengyan jing xun wen ji* 楞嚴經熏聞記, X11: 755c. Also see Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 858a.

[41] Zhengshou 正受, *Lengyan jing helun* 楞嚴經合論, X12: 94a.

another important text in the Chan school.[42] Chan commentaries of the sutra were also influential.[43] The *Zun ding fa lun* 尊頂法論 by Huihong Juefan 慧洪覺範 (1071-1128) further developed the unity of Chan practice and scriptural teaching[44] which encouraged Chan monks even more to value scriptural study considering the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* the guideline for reaching enlightenment. Topics such as "the seven locations of mind-seeking" and "the eight returnings" were often used in Chan's encounter dialogue.[45] The two great Chan masters, Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1189-1163)[46] and Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 (1091-1157)[47] regarded "the interpenetration by means of ear-organ" as Chan practice. Chan monk, Qisong 契嵩, even used the sutra to reconcile Confucianism and Buddhism to persuade the emperor to protect Buddhism.[48] Similarly, other schools in the Song also used the sutra to support their traditions.[49]

While the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was further absorbed by the different Buddhist schools,

---

[42] The *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra,* the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Platform Sutra* are three important texts in the Chan school.

[43] Letan Xiaoyue 泐潭曉月 had *Biaozhi yaoyi* 標指要義. Minseng Xianhui 閩僧咸輝 had *Lengyan jing yihai* 楞嚴經義海. Wenling Jiehuan 溫陵戒環 had *Lengyan jing yaojue* 楞嚴經要解. See Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 504a-c.

[44] Ibid., 844c-45b.

[45] See, for example, Puji 普濟, *Wu deng hui yuan* 五燈會元. X80: 408c.

[46] See his *Dahui pujue chanshi yulu* 大慧普覺禪師語錄. T47: 882c-83a.

[47] See his *Hongzhi chanshi guanlu* 宏智禪師廣錄. T48: 70a.

[48] See his *Tan jin wen ji* 鐔津文集.T52: 689a-b.

[49] For example, Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214) emphasized that "the interpenetration of Buddha contemplation" is Pure Land practice. See his *Leban wen lei* 樂邦文類, T47:152c. The Vinaya monk Yuanzhao 元照 (1048-1116) employed the sutra to uphold the discipline. See his *Sifenlu xingshichao zichiji* 四分律行事鈔資持記, T40: 212a. The Esoteric monk Daodian 道殿 (b.1056) used the sutra to present mind-nature as ultimate teachings. See his *Xian mi yuantong chengfo xin yao ji* 顯密圓通成佛心要集, T46: 990b, 993c.

it also gradually influenced Confucianism and Daoism. The sutra was popular among the literati in the Song. As government official Chen Guan 陳瓘 (1042-1106) pointed out, those literati who study Buddhism "only read the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, and the [Chan] 'records of the transmission of the lamp' (*zhuan deng yu lu* 傳燈語錄)."[50] Numerous officials and literati such as Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), Su Che 蘇轍 (1039-1112), Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086), Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043-1121), and Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) were all familiar with the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.[51] The commentaries by Wang and Zhang were highly valued by monks.[52] Even though Neo-Confucians such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 denied the authority of the sutra, it was a necessary text that they needed to read and absorb in order to reject Buddhism.[53] Also, the Daoist work, *Wu zhen pian* 悟真篇 (*Awakening to Reality*), was written after the author, Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (984-1082), the founder of the South sect of Daoism, had been inspired by the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and he claimed the enlightened mind discussed in the sutra to be the truth.[54]

The sutra continued to rise in popularity in the Yuan. Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263-1323) and his disciple Tianru Weize 天如惟則 (1284-1354), two great Chan

---

[50] See Zhipan, *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, T49: 443c.

[51] See Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 851a, 862b, 861c, 504b. Regarding Huang Tingjian, see Xia Shufang, *Ming gong fa xi zhi* 名公法喜志, X88: 345b.

[52] Wang's *Lengyan jing jue* 楞嚴經解 was praised by Juefan 覺範 as, "Those who do not know the sublime can not see [the profundity of] it." Zhang's *Buzhu* 補註 was praised by Zonggao 宗杲 "Because he thoroughly sees through the marrow of the Śakyamūṇi Buddha." See Juefan, *Lin jian lu* 林間錄, X87: 276a ; *Dahui pujue chanshi yulu* 大慧普覺禪師語錄, T47: 887c.

[53] See Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 864c.

[54] See Tanxiu, *Ren Tian Bao Jian* 人天寶鑑. X87: 12a.

monks in the Yuan, made efforts to spread the sutra. Weize wrote the *Lengyan Huijie* 楞嚴會解 (*The Reconciliatory Interpretations of the Śūraṃgama Sūtra*), which became the most influential commentary during the next two hundred years.[55] Developing the unity of Chan and scriptural teachings, Weize emphasized that the sutra is not only a text that Chan monks have to study[56] but also a text that no other scripture can surpass when pointing to mind-nature.[57] The Huayan and Tiantai schools were in decline in the Yuan. In his efforts to revive Huayan, Biefeng Datong 別峰大同 (1289-1370) advocated the Śūraṃgama Samādhi.[58] Leading Tiantai monk, Yuanmeng Yunze 雲夢允澤 (1232-1297), thoroughly studied the sutra.[59] Pudu 普度 (d.1330), a famous Pure Land monk of the Yuan, used the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to support the Pure Land practice.[60] In fact, the Śūraṃgama Mantra was recited by Yuan monks in most Buddhist rituals.[61] Scholar Liu Mi 劉謐 (n.d.) cited from the sutra to harmonize the three teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.[62]

By the mid-Ming, even though Buddhism had been suffering a decline, the

---

[55] See Jiaoguang 交光, *Lengyan jing zheng mai shu xuan shi* 楞嚴經正脉疏懸示, X12: 162b.

[56] See Shanyu 善遇, *Tianru Weize chan shi yulu* 天如惟則禪師語錄, X70: 825b.

[57] See Chuandeng, *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏, X12: 692b.

[58] See Xingzhong Zuwang 興中祖旺, *Xianshou chuandeng lu* 賢首傳燈錄, 32, 34.

[59] See *Xu fozu tong ji* 續佛祖統紀, X75: 742c.

[60] He quoted many teachings from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to support the practice of reciting the name of the Buddha in his *Lushan lianzong baojian* 廬山蓮宗寶鑑 (*Precious Mirror of Lotus Sect of Mount Lu*). See, for example, T47:328a, 347a, 348a. Pudu even recited the Śūraṃgama mantra one time in each prostration while he prostrated three times to each word of his *Lushan lianzong baojian*. See *Lushan lianzong baojian* 廬山蓮宗寶鑑, T47: 351c.

[61] See, for example, Yixian, *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規, X63: 630a-c; Dehui, *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, T48: 1151c-52a.

[62] See his *Sanjiao pingxin lun* 三教平心論, T52: 791a-b.

Śūraṃgama Sūtra remained influential. For example, Chushi Fanqi 楚石梵琦 (1296-1370), considered by Zhuhong "the foremost Chan master of the Ming,"[63] was inspired by the sutra and vowed to follow its teachings for the rest of his life.[64] Huayan master, Huijin 慧進 (1355-1436), was invited to the capital to lecture on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* with more than ten thousands listeners gathered at the scene.[65] Tiantai monk, Taipu Ruqi 太璞如玘 (1320-1385), was praised by the Yongle emperor for studying many sutras including the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.[66] Chuandeng's teacher, Baisong, wrote the *Lengyan bai wen* 楞嚴百問 (*One Hundred Questions about the Śūraṃgama Sūtra*),[67] and often preached the sutra.[68]

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Late-Ming Syncretism of the Three Teachings

The rich doctrines the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* carries about mind-nature are the keys to why the sutra was prevalent in the late Ming. As a foreign culture, Buddhism generally stood on its own position to harmonize with the two indigenous traditions, Confucianism and Daoism, and the teachings would eventually coalesce around the mind-nature idea in the late Ming. By the Song, the idea that mind-nature as truth had appeared in Daoism, just as Daoist Zhang Boduan cited that the ultimate teachings of enlightenment were in

---

[63] See Zhuhong's *Huangming mingseng jive* 皇明名僧輯略, X84: 361b.

[64] See *Chushi Fanqi chanshi yulu* 楚石梵琦禪師語錄, X71: 659c, 656b.

[65] See *Buxu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳, X77: 393a-b.

[66] See Dawen Huanlun 大聞幻輪, *Sh ijian ji gu ive xu ji* 釋鑑稽古略續集, T49: 933c.

[67] See Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 505c.

[68] See Chuandeng, "Ming Miaofeng Jue fashi taming" 明妙峰覺法師塔銘, *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 233-4.

the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as mentioned earlier.[69] Neo-Confucianism, on the other hand, borrowed the mind-nature idea from Buddhism, but Zhu Xi, as the leading Neo-Confucian, still maintained the traditional idea of "Heaven Principle" as the ultimate truth. That is, Heaven Principle exists prior to the human mind and is the nature of the human mind. It was not until the Ming that the three teachings came to the agreement that mind-nature is truth. In the mid-Ming, Wang Yanming, the most influential Neo-Confucian thinker after Zhu Xi, called the mind "the innate knowing" (*liang zhi* 良知) and replaced the Heaven Principle with the mind-nature as the ultimate truth. Accordingly, the mind became the nature of all things because Wang believed that the mind shaped all things. The Mind Learning of Yangming (*yangming xin xue* 陽明心學*)* soon became mainstream in Confucianism. Yangming was the first to set up the Confucian vision from the point of view of mind-nature and philosophically broke the boundaries that separated the three teachings. As Araki Kengo points out, since Yangming, the three teachings were for the first time able to reach a common view on mind-nature.[70] This common view helped the "Three Teachings in One" movement reach a new pinnacle of interest in the late Ming. It was very common then that most Buddhists, Daoists, and Confucians advocated the Three Teachings in One. This idea was especially popular among Confucians. Lin Zhaoen 林兆恩 (1517-1598) even established the "Three-in-one" religion (*san yi jiao* 三一教). He claimed that, "The teachings of Confucius is mind-nature. The teachings of Huangdi (黃帝) and Laozi (老子, the founder

[69] See Zhang Boduan, *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇, p.596(2).

[70] Araki, *Mindai shisō kenkyū* 明代思想研究, 270.

of Daoism) is mind-nature. The teachings of Śākya (the Buddha) is mind-nature."[71] This reflected the consequence of Buddhism's long-term influence on Confucianism and Daoism.[72]

The "Three Teachings in One" helped to propel the lay Buddhist movement and increased the popularity of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* among the late Ming literati. Since the Mind Learning of Yangming was inspired by Buddhism, Buddhism was no longer considered heresy in Confucianism.[73] This resulted in many Confucian literati turning to Buddhism in order to seek a deeper understanding of mind-nature.[74] Zhixu, one of the four great masters of the late Ming, mentioned this fact, saying, "Since Yangming, the eminent Confucians after him are all deeply absorbed in Buddhism."[75] Famous Confucians such as Zhao Dazhou 趙大洲, Yang Qiyuan 楊起元, Deng Huoqu 鄧豁渠, Zhou Rudeng 周汝登, Tao Wangling 陶望齡, Li Zhi 李贄, Jiao Hong 焦竑, Guan Zhidao 管志道, Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道, and Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道 all turned to Buddhism. Many literati became Buddhists, associating themselves with leading monks thus expanding the lay Buddhist movement, a major contributing factor to the revival of Buddhism at the time.

The literati's search for the deeper mind-nature doctrine was no doubt revealed in their interest in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. According to Shengyan's study, only two sutras, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and the *Diamond Sutra*, had broad influence on the lay Buddhists

---

71 Lin Zhaoen, *Xin Nan Pian* 信難篇, 1193.

72 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 56.

73 Ibid.,70.

74 Ibid., 55, 63.

75 See his *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36: 332.

who studied scriptures in the late Ming.[76] Since the *Diamond Sutra* emphasizes the emptiness doctrine, it is reasonable to say that most literati turned to the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* in search of the doctrine of mind-nature. There are records that show the prevalence of the sutra among the literati. It is a fact that the government official Liu Xixuan 劉錫玄 always had on his desk Chuandeng's *Commentary* and *The Profound Meaning* on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, saying "these are what I admire."[77] Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙 also mentioned the literati's zeal for the sutra and their disregard of Confucian texts. Yu said, "Nowadays the literati are accustomed to learning more broadly and disdain the six scriptures [of Confucianism]. More than half of them study the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[78] This demonstrates that the late-Ming literati were eager to study the sutra because they appreciated Buddhism.

The literati's attitude toward Buddhism in the late Ming was different from that in the Song. Zhu Xi denied the teachings of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* which for him represented the Buddhist mind-nature doctrine. He said, "Heaven and earth (*tian di* 天地) are the inherent things. They cannot be produced by the mind. If the mind can produce the form of Heaven, this belongs to the Buddhist theory that 'when the thought solidifies, it forms the land (*xiang cheng cheng guo tu* 想澄成國土).'"[79] The sentence he cited is from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. Viewing Heaven as the ultimate truth, the literati in the Song would not accept the mind as the nature of all things as expressed in the sutra and they

---

[76] Shengyan, *Ming mo fo jiao yan jiu* 明末佛教研究, 287-88.

[77] Chuandeng, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 345.

[78] See his "Lengyan xuan yi xu" 楞嚴玄義序, *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 195.

[79] See his *Hui an ji* 晦庵集, fascicle, 401.

considered the sutra heresy. In the Ming, however, many leading Neo-Confucians viewed this sutra as a teaching comparable to Confucianism and even surpassing it. For example, Luo Jinxi 羅近溪 (1515-1588) said, "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* accords with the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸 *Zhong yong*) [of Confucianism]."[80] Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521-1593) claimed that the subtlety of the mind-nature teachings of Buddhism complete the defects of Confucianism.[81] To show Buddhism's subtlety, Xu Wei cited from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* the example of King Prasenajit whose mind-nature over time never changed when looking at the Ganges River at different stages in his life.[82] He also praised the sutra's teachings about the unity of mind-nature and all things.[83] Xu's focus on the "unity of mind-nature and all things" reflected the general interest of the literati for the sutra at that time. Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602) referenced the sutra, saying, "my body, together with the outside mountains, rivers, the earth and the space as we see, are only the tiny objects [manifested] in my true mind of profound enlightenment."[84] He emphasized that the mind-nature discussed by the sutra is not limited to the body but pervades everything. It is precisely the sutra's subtle doctrine of mind-nature that attracted the influential literati to dedicate themselves to study and write commentaries about it. For example, Xu Wei 徐渭, Guan Zhidao 管志道, Jiao Hong 焦竑, Yin Shixun 殷時訓, Zhong Xing 鍾惺, Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, and Zeng Fengyi 曾鳳儀 all wrote commentaries on the

---

[80] See Qian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 886a.

[81] See his "Zeng li shi xu" 贈禮師序, *Xu Wenchang quan ji* 徐文長全集, 238.

[82] See his "Zeng li shi xu" 贈禮師序. Ibid., 239.

[83] See his "Tao chan ji xu" 逃禪集序. Ibid., 246

[84] See his "Jie jing wen" 解經文, *Fen Shu* 焚書, 137.

Śūraṃgama Sūtra.[85] Lu Guangzu 陸光祖[86] and Wang Xinghai 王性海[87] often gave lectures on the sutra. Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎,[88] Zhao Dazhou 趙大洲, Qu Ruji 瞿汝稷, and Bao Xingquan 鮑性泉[89] were all versed in its teaching. Moreover, Lu Xixing 陸西星 (1520-1606), the founder of the Eastern Sect of Inner Alchemy (*neidan dong pai* 內丹東派) of Daoism, wrote two commentaries on it as a Buddhist follower.[90]

The sutra was also an important tool used by late-Ming Buddhists to assert its superiority over Confucianism and Daoism. For example, while Zhuhong 袾宏 advocated that the three teachings are the same principle but different in depth,[91] he asked Zhang Xinyu 張心虞, a Confucian official, to study the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. He said, "I am afraid that Confucian teachings and the schools of Lian 濂 and Luo 洛 (two Confucian schools) never reached the sutra's teaching about 'the Way.' The *Laozi* 老子 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (two fundamental texts of Daoism) are not comparable to it either."[92] For Zhuhong, both Confucianism and Daoism were inferior to the sutra.

Zhuhong further used the sutra to point out the defects of Confucian practice.

---

[85] Tongli, *Lengyan jing zhizhang shu xuan shi* 楞嚴經指掌疏懸示, X16: 10b. Jiao Hong's commentary is *Lengyan jing jing jie ping lin* 楞嚴經精解評林, X15: p221c.

[86] See Quian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 886a.

[87] See Peng Jiqing 彭際清, *Ju shi zhuan* 居士傳, X88: 251a.

[88] See Quian Qianyi, *Lengyan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔, X13: 849c-50a.

[89] See Peng Jiqing 彭際清, *Ju shi zhuan* 居士傳, X88: 252a, 265c, 259b.

[90] See his *Lengyan jing shuo yue* 楞嚴經說約, X14: no. 294, and *Lengyan jing shu zhi* 楞嚴經述旨, X14: no. 295.

[91] See his "San jiao yi jia" 三教一家, *Zheng e ji* 正訛集, *Lianchi da shi quan ji* 蓮池大師全集, vol.4, 4094.

[92] See his "Da shanxi Zhang Xinyu yi ling" 答陝西張心虞邑令, *Yi gao* 遺稿, ibid., 4580.

Regarding the practice of how to return to mind-nature, Wang Yangming considered that one should return to the state of "the Mean (*zhong* 中) when joy, anger, sorrow and pleasure have not yet arisen," as taught in the *Doctrine of the Mean.* And how one should do it is by getting rid of all thoughts.[93] Zhuhong, however, realized that this was incorrect upon reading this passage in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra,* "Even though you eliminate all [the consciousness of] seeing, hearing, perceiving, and knowing and inwardly maintain a deep tranquility, this state is still the object of your discrimination, like 'a shadow.'" He therefore warned practitioners that the state of the Mean, without the thoughts of joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure, was just the motionless object of one's subtle discrimination and this state was not real. It was like "a shadow," like the sutra says. Mind-nature was still far away from the tranquility of the Mean and one should carefully examine this tranquility again and again.[94] For Zhuhong, the teaching of the sutra surpassed the teaching of the Mean in detecting false deluded thoughts. According to Araki Kengo, this "shadow" metaphor discussed in the sutra became a guide by which the literati examined their practice.[95] Similarly, Zhenke and Hanshan also regarded that the sutra represented the superiority of Buddhism over the other two teachings.[96]

---

[93] See his *Chuan xi lu* 傳習錄, 36.

[94] See his "Xi nu ai le wei fa yi " 喜怒哀樂未發一, *Zhu chuang er bi* 竹窗二筆, in *Lianchi da shi quan ji* 蓮池大師全集, vol.4, 3840.

[95] Araki, *Yōmeigaku no kaiten to Bukkyō* 陽明学の開展と仏教, 260.

[96] See his *Zibo zunzhe quan ji* 紫柏尊者全集, X73: 243a, 311a. Zhenke used the mind-nature idea of the sutra to differentiate Buddhism from Confucianism and Daoism. Zhenke said, "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* says that 'if light is the necessary condition for seeing, then darkness causes the absence of seeing. However, if [seeing] can perceive without light, then darkness can never obscure the seeing.' I awakened to it and since then I realized that Confucianism and Daoism are not the same Way [as Buddhism]." In his interaction with official Tang Ningan 唐凝庵, Zhenke also cited this idea from the sutra. As for Hanshan, See *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, X73: 771b, 769c, 586b, 590c. Hanshan emphasized that before reading Daoist texts one should "be versed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to understand the Buddhist theory for refuting the false belief so that one will not be confused by the writings of [Daoism]." For him, the Daoist

Like his contemporaries, while Chuandeng claimed that the three teachings are all essential,[97] he also used the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to maintain the superiority of Buddhism over Daoism and Confucianism. He said, "There is a text that has a few words that are similar [to some of the words in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*], but the meaning is different. The difference is as far removed [from each other] as heaven is from earth. The text [that I am referring to] is the [Daoist work] *Zhuangzi* 莊子."[98] When comparing Buddhism to Confucianism, Chuandeng quoted from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* the mind-nature teaching to represent Buddhism and to show Buddhism's superiority over Confucianism. He said:

> "When speaking about the origin of the one true dharma-nature, my Buddhism says that all the sentient beings originally posses mind-nature and it is called [in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*] 'the wonderful light of the enlightened nature and the bright wonder of the original enlightenment.' 'It is originally pure and everywhere in the dharma realm.' However, Confucianism only speaks about 'What heaven confers is called nature.' As for the explanation about the bright virtue, Confucianism only speaks about what humans obtain from heaven and never says one word about nature including heaven."[99]

Although the discussions between Chuandeng and the literati about the comparison between the teachings of the sutra and those of Confucianism or Daoism were not

---

idea of voidness (*xuwu* 虛無) as the nature of all things is superior to Confucian teachings, but it is easy to be misunderstood as the mind-nature taught by Buddhism. He cited the sutra to explain, "The central concept that Laozi (the founder of Daoism) upheld is voidness as the great way. This is what the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* describes, 'out of obscurity, a mental void appears.'" Hanshan believed that according to the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, Daoist voidness is not the true mind but is merely the ālaya-vijñāna, which is created by deluded thoughts and is the source of this defiled world. By this clarification, Hanshan pointed out the defects of Daoist understanding of mind-nature as well as the superiority of Buddhism over Daoism and Confucianism. In his interaction with the literati, he also highlighted the importance of the sutra. Hanshan told official Yu Suxin 虞素心, "With regard to the true practice of transcending this secular world, it is only the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*." He also told to scholar Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, "If one does not understand the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, one does not have the key to the distinction between delusion and enlightenment regarding cultivating the mind."

[97] Chuandeng, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 691-92.

[98] See his *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu qian mao* 楞嚴經圓通疏前茅, X14: 685a.

[99] See his *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏, X12: 767a.

recorded, judging from many letters which praise Chuandeng's lectures on the sutra, his views were apparently convincing for many government officials and Confucian literati. When talking about Chuandeng's lectures on the sutra, for example, official Chen Xifan 陳希范 said, "He is the one whom the gentry in this country respect and admire."[100] Confucian literati such as Ma Yiteng 馬一騰 and Teng Guoying 騰國英 expressed their eagerness to listen to Chuandeng's lecture on the sutra, saying "All the people from different places crane their necks to look forward to your visit in the hope that your lectures can quench the thirst of our hearts."[101] Official Liu Kangzhi 劉康祉 said, "It is not until I read your new *Commentary on* [*Śūraṃgama Sūtra*] that I realized the other commentaries are just like the silent winter cicada and yours is like the lion's roar."[102]

The great popularity of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* among the intellectual literati was an important indicator of the revival of late Ming Buddhism. Its popularity among the literate reflected the syncretic trend of Three Teachings in One at that time, and, on the other hand, the sutra represents the subtle Buddhist doctrine of mind-nature by which Buddhism itself maintained its superiority over Confucianism and Daoism.

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Late-Ming Buddhist Syncretism

There is a reciprocal relationship between the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and the "Three Teachings in One" thought, while the latter provided a favorable situation for the prevalence of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. The sutra's teaching of "Mind-nature" became the

---

[100] Chuandeng, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 396.

[101] Ibid., 375.

[102] Ibid., 368.

common view of the three teachings as well as among the different Buddhist schools. Externally, Buddhism followed the direction of the Three Teachings in One. Internally, Buddhism was undergoing a large-scale blending of different schools. Without this common view on mind-nature, it would have been impossible for syncretism to have taken hold within late Ming Buddhism. Most leading monks, such as the four great masters and Chuandeng, made efforts to harmonize the different approaches of the different schools by the mind-nature idea in order to revive Buddhism. Indeed, they regarded the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as representing the mind-nature idea in the late Ming. For example, Zhenke said, "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is our own mind. Our own mind is the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[103] For Hanshan, "In revealing the gist of mind-nature, no scripture can surpass the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[104] Chuandeng said, "[In the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*] what the Buddha understands and sees is the eternal true mind as essence."[105] Perhaps Hanshan best explained the reason why this sutra was so important for Ming thinkers, "[The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*] has thorough insight into the origin of the one-mind and includes all the dharmas to the utmost extent. No scripture surpasses the extensiveness and completion of this sutra."[106]

It is clear that this sutra served as the philosophical basis to harmonize Buddhist schools. During the late Ming, "the unity of Chan and scriptural teachings" was the guiding phrase and "mind-nature" the principle by which these leading monks sought to harmonize the teachings and practices of the different Buddhist schools in their tasks of

---

[103] See his *Zibo zunzhe quan ji* 紫柏尊者全集, X73: 278c.

[104] See his *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, X73: 604c.

[105] See his *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏, X12: 694b.

[106] See his *Lengyan tong yi* 楞嚴通議, X12: 532a.

reviving Buddhism.[107] Scriptural teachings broadly represented all the schools other than Chan, particularly Tiantai and Huayan, as Chan regarded its teaching to be "the separate transmission outside the scriptures."

In advocating unity, most leading monks upheld the authority and necessity of scripture—mainly because many Chan monks rejected scriptural study and only relied upon their conclusions about practice, causing corruption and neglect of discipline. The leading monks then argued that not only Chan monks but also all Buddhists should value scriptures as the utmost guideline. This gave a great impetus to the rise of scriptural study and the esteem for scriptures in the late Ming.

With its rich doctrine, accordingly, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* became a major indicator of this new popular direction for valuing scriptures as well as becoming an indicator for syncretism in Buddhist schools. The high value that the four great masters placed on this sutra provides strong evidence. Zhuhong, the most influential master among the four, emphasized the importance of reading this sutra first: "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* has the best order [in discussing Buddhist teaching], one should read it first."[108] He challenged the Chan tradition, saying, "Chan monks use the excuse of 'the separate transmission outside the scriptures.' They do not know that investigating [the mind] without scriptural teachings is the wrong cause."[109] Regarding scripture choice, he claimed that, "If one has

---

[107] For example, Hanshan said, "Scriptural teachings is for the illustration of the one-mind, which is the essence of Chan." See *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, X73: 500c. Zhuhong used "one-mind" to link Chan meditation and the Pure Land practice of the recitation of the name of the Buddha. For Zhuhong, both practices are to realize the one mind. See Chün-fang Yü's *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, 61. Zhixu pointed out, "[We] cannot find the Chan, scriptural teachings and Vinaya (discipline) outside the mind." See his *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36: 285.

[108] Hanshan, *Ba shi ba zu dao ying zhuan zan* 八十八祖道影傳贊, X86: 647a.

[109] See his *Zhu chuang sui bi* 竹窗隨筆, *Lianchi da shi quan ji* 蓮池大師全集, vol.3, 3696.

no time to read all the scriptures, one can read only the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[110]

Zhuhong, who strongly upheld the "dual practice of Chan and Pure Land," also cited the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to demonstrate this dual practice, which is the integration of the Chan practice of seeing one's own mind with the Pure Land practice of the recitation of the Buddha's name (*nianfo* 念佛, also called the practice of Buddha-contemplation). From the sutra, he cited as an example the Dashizhi bodhisattva's practice of Buddha-contemplation.[111] In the sutra, Dashizhi's mind that contemplated the Buddha (*nianfo xin* 念佛心) attained the Buddha-contemplation Samādhi (*nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧). Zhuhong saw Dashizhi's practice as an example of the unity of Chan and Pure Land practices. For him, Dashizhi realized that his mind was no different from the Buddha he contemplated. That is, Dashizhi not only contemplated the Buddha, as in the Pure Land practice, but also contemplated his own mind as the Buddha, as in the Chan practice.[112] Moreover, for Zhuhong, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* also demonstrated the reconciliation of the Chan mind and the rebirth in Pure Land. As Zhuhong asserted, "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* indicates that the space in the ten directions are all inside your mind. It is thus clear that the rebirth in Pure Land is the rebirth in your own mind."[113]

Zhuhong also used the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to advocate the unity of Vinaya (discipline) and other schools. He said that the following passage in the sutra, "to keep the

---

[110] See Zhou Kefu 周克復, *Jingtu chen zhong* 淨土晨鐘, X62: 59b.

[111] See his *Jingtu yi bian* 淨土疑辨, T47: 420a.

[112] See his *Amituo jing shu chao* 阿彌陀經疏鈔, X22: 606b.

[113] Ibid., 668a.

bodhisattva precepts is to keep the mind unmoved,"[114] already demonstrated the unity of Vinaya and Chan because it showed that precepts and the mind are no different. He also used the sutra to support the unity of Vinaya and scriptural teachings. He said, "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* talks about the four fundamental precepts (no killing, no stealing, no sexual behavior and no lying). It edifies [sentient beings] by using different metaphors such as 'the steaming sands cannot make themselves become rice' and 'pouring water in a broken pot can not fill it.' These scriptural teachings are thus identical to the Discipline."[115] Zhuhong said that the Mantra and the teaching written in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* both point to the true mind,[116] thus demonstrating the unity of Esoteric and Exoteric teachings (secret mantras and explicit doctrines). Because, for him, reciting a mantra was simultaneously contemplating the mind and this is what the explicit doctrine teaches. Indeed, Zhuhong praised the sutra as being the most authoritative text regarding doctrinal study. That is why eminent Chan monk, Mailang 麥浪, regarded Zhuhong's commentary *Lengyan jing mo xiang ji* 楞嚴經摸象記 as Zhuhong's representative work on scriptural study.[117]

Likewise, Hanshan stressed that the highest guidelines for practice are in scriptures.[118] Moreover, the study and dissemination of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was his life long devotion. He used it to confirm his enlightenment and wrote two works about

---

[114] See his *Fanwang pusa jie jing yi shu fa yin* 梵網菩薩戒經義疏發隱, X38: 211a.

[115] Ibid., 221a.

[116] See his *Lengyan jing mo xiang ji* 楞嚴經摸象記, X12: 483a, 495b.

[117] Mailang, *Yunmen Mailang huai chan shi zong men she nan* 雲門麥浪懷禪師宗門設難, X73: 862c.

[118] See *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, X73: 537a.

the sutra, *Lengyan jing xuan jing* 楞嚴經懸鏡 and *Lengyan jing tong yi* 楞嚴經通議.[119] He said, "for the understanding of the true practice to transcend this secular world, there is only the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[120] He further claimed that it is the necessary sutra for all the Buddhists to read, whether they be Chan monks or students of scriptures.[121]

To harmonize the different schools, Hanshan maintained that "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* alone is enough to integrate Chan and scriptural teachings into the one-mind."[122] For him, both the meditation and the doctrine discussed in the sutra were about one-mind. Thus, Chan and the schools of scriptural teaching were united by the one-mind as discussed in this sutra. Hanshan used the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to emphasize the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land as well. He saw the dual practice as the practice of reciting the Buddha's name while simultaneously seeking where the recitation arose from and ceased in the mind until one realized mind-nature.[123] He argued that only reciting the Buddha's name, without contemplating the mind, was useful but not ultimate. Reciting was only like the settling of muddy waters discussed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. Reciting can settle the mud to the bottom of the cup and the clear water appears, but the mud is still there. The dual practice was more like a next step as pointed out in the sutra, that is, to remove the mud so the water becomes entirely pure, just like eradicating ignorance to make the mind entirely pure.[124]

---

[119] X12: no. 277; X12: no. 279.

[120] See *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, X73: 586b.

[121] Ibid., 691b.

[122] Ibid., 607c.

[123] Ibid., *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, X73: 490c.

[124] Ibid., 491a.

Hanshan also showed the unity of Vinaya and Chan by saying that, "this great Śūraṃgama Samādhi (Chan meditation) is the true cause for attaining Buddhahood. Its root is the precepts. If the mind of precepts is pure and clean, one then enters into the state of Buddhahood."[125] Moreover, Hanshan regarded The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the unity of the Esoteric and Exoteric teachings. He said, "this sutra talks about the infinite merits of the tathāgatagarbha nature. [The Śūraṃgama] Mantra is the Mind-seal of all the Buddhas and keeps unlimited teachings. [Thus the sutra] is the dual practice of the Esoteric and Exoteric teachings as well as the true essence for attaining Buddhahood."[126] Hanshan pointed out that the explicit teaching about mind-nature in the sutra is the Exoteric teaching and the Śūraṃgama Mantra keeps all the mind-nature teachings of tathāgatagarbha, so in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* both Esoteric and the Exoteric teachings converge on mind-nature.

Zhenke held similar views in using the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as an important text in his task for reviving Buddhism in the late Ming. He wrote a commentary, *Shi lengyan jing* 釋楞嚴經,[127] and claimed that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* illuminated his understanding of mind-nature. He said, "When I read the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* before, initially, I had doubts about the 'seven locations of mind-seeking.' Afterward, the doubts suddenly disappeared. Since then I realized that the mind of the Buddha is my very mind."[128] As for which sutras were important to read, he also regarded the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as one of the top four sutras to read along with the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra,* the *Lotus Sutra*, and *The Sutra of*

---

[125] See his *Lengyan jing tong yi* 楞嚴經通議, X12: 601b.

[126] Ibid., 657b.

[127] See *Zibo zunzhe quan ji* 紫柏尊者全集, X73: 242c-245b.

[128] Ibid., 242c.

Perfect Enlightenment.[129] In advocating the unity of Chan and scriptural teaching, he emphasized that without the teachings in the Buddha's words, one could not realize the mind about which Chan spoke.[130] He used the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to prove it. He reasoned that the sutra considers "the interpenetration by means of ear-organ" as the most suitable practice because the Buddha wanted sentient beings to hear the teachings through the sound of spoken words so as to be awakened to the mind.[131] The sutra thus showed that mind is where Chan contemplation and scriptural teachings converge.

According to Shengyan's study, Zhixu's core thought was based on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.[132] Zhixu also wrote two commentaries on the sutra, the *Lengyan jing xuanyi* (The Mysterious Meanings of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* 楞嚴經玄義) and the *Lengyan jing wen ju* (Words and Sentences of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* 楞嚴經文句.[133] Zhixu regarded the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the most important text to read. As he said, "Although one can not understand all the numerous scriptures of the Buddhist canon, one must master the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[134] He even claimed that there were only two scriptures, the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* and the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra,* that could save Chan from its wrong practice.[135] The former, a text of bodhisattva precepts, could prevent the monastic discipline from decline. The latter represented all Buddhist teachings that practitioners

---

[129] Ibid., 196a-b.

[130] Ibid.,148b, 269b.

[131] Ibid., 148a-b.

[132] Shengyan, *Ming mo Zhongguo fo jiao zhi yan jiu* 明末中國佛教之研究, 433.

[133] See X13: no.284. no. 285.

[134] See his *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36: 330.

[135] See his *Lengyan jin wen ju* 楞嚴經文句, X13: 381c.

needed to understand. Zhixu also viewed the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as representing the unity of Chan and scriptural teaching. He said that the sutra is "the compass for navigating the scriptural teaching ocean and the correct-eye to guide the *Zong* (Chan) vehicle."[136] He insisted that "it is impossible for one to be enlightened if one practices Chan and rejects scriptural Teachings."[137] He even explained the unique Chan term "the separate transmission outside the scriptures" as "the authentic transmission within the scriptural teachings." His reasoning was, "If one's mind does not get the approval by scriptures, how can it be called the transmission of the mind-seal of the Buddha?"[138]

Additionally, to demonstrate the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land, Zhixu asserted that in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, the Buddha's interrogations of Ānanda in the section of seven locations —"What do you use to see the Buddha? Who is fond of the Buddha?"— are the original sources for the question "who is contemplating/reciting the name of the Buddha"[139] that Chan monks often used to investigate the mind-nature when practicing the Chan and Pure Land dual practice. Actually, according to Shengyan, both Zhixu's Chan thought and Pure Land thought were based on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.[140] Like the other three great masters, Zhixu also said that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* showed the unity of the Esoteric and the Exoteric: "All the explicit words of the ten fascicles reveal the tathāgatagarbha mind. The five passages of the Mantra secretly interpret the tathāgatagarbha mind. Although the Exoteric and Esoteric are different, the mind-nature

---

[136] Ibid., 381c.

[137] See his *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36: 275c.

[138] Ibid., 322c.

[139] Zhixu, *Lengyan jing wen ju* 楞嚴經文句, X13: 231a.

[140] Shengyan, *Ming mo Zhongguo fo jiao zhi yan jiu* 明末中國佛教之研究, 408.

are one principle. The whole mind forms the Mantra and the whole Mantra transmits the mind."[141]

In view of the above, it is not surprising that Chuandeng also regarded this sutra as having the highest scriptural authority. He claimed that "only the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* illuminates the insightful views of the Buddha to the fullest extent,"[142] given that he reached his initial enlightenment while studying it under his teacher Baisong. Indeed, the sutra shaped Chuandeng's core thought and because he advocated the sutra throughout his life, he was honored as "the one who revived the The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[143] Likewise, like the Ming Buddhist masters discussed above, Chuandeng also believed that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* demonstrated the unity of the Chan and scriptural teachings. For him, the sutra represents not only the whole of Buddhist teachings but it was also the guideline to Chan practice. He said, "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*: what a great sutra! No dharmas that it does not include. No teachings that it does not contain. … It is truly the wonderful gate for 'illuminating [one's own] mind and seeing [one's own] nature' (*ming xin jian xing* 明心見性, a Chan term) as well as the secret text for becoming a Buddha and being a patriarch."[144] Stressing the importance of scripture, Chuandeng pointed out that the mind-nature idea was what Chan and scriptural teachings have in common.[145] He also said, "to rely on scriptures to confirm enlightenment is the true way of Chan practice

---

[141] See his *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36: 356c.

[142] See his *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu qian mao* 楞嚴經圓通疏前茅, X14: 685b.

[143] See his *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏, X12: 689b.

[144] Ibid., 690b.

[145] See his *Yongjia chan zong ji zhu* 永嘉禪宗集註, X63: 282a.

and can never lead to the wrong way."[146]

To support the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land, Chuandeng also cited Dashizhi's practice as related in the sutra. Chuandeng saw that if one only contemplates one's own mind as the Buddha, it is no other than Chan practice. If one only contemplates the other Buddhas outside oneself, it is no other than Pure Land practice. If one contemplates both, it is dual practice.[147] He argued that the example of Dashizhi's *nianfo* practice is the contemplation of both the Buddha within and the Buddhas without. As he described Dashizhi's practice, "while one is doing *nianfo* [as Dashizhi would], all the sense-organs and all their objects are everywhere in the Dharma-realm. Amitābha Buddha already appears inside one's mind. One's body already dwells inside the Pure Land."[148] Thus, this was the dual practice as demonstrated in the sutra. Zhixu also cited Chuandeng's idea on Dashizhi's Buddha-contemplation practice to further support the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land.[149]

Similarly, Chuandeng relied on the sutra to prove the unity of Vinaya and scriptural teachings as well as the unity of the Exoteric and Esoteric teachings. According to him, the sutra's idea "to keep the mind concentrated is discipline" (*she xin wie jie* 攝心為戒) indicated the unity of Vinaya and Chan. He said, "This means that right meditation (*zheng ding* 正定) is discipline."[150] As for the unity of the Exoteric and Esoteric teachings, Chuandeng said, "This sutra has two seals. The tathāgatagarbha is called the

[146] See his *Tiantai fang wai zhi* 天台方外志, 68-69.

[147] See *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏, X12: 828a.

[148] Ibid., 827c.

[149] Zhixu, *Lengyan jing wen ju* 楞嚴經文句, X13: 309b-310a.

[150] Chuandeng, *Lengyan jing yuan tong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏, X12: 850a.

Exoteric seal (*xian yin* 顯印). The Śūraṃgama Mantra is called the Esoteric seal (*mi yin* 密印). Both teachings regarded Reality as the Mind-seal."[151]

More significantly, Chuandeng not only used the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to argue for the unity of all the Buddhist schools as his fellow Buddhists, he also used the sutra to support Tiantai doctrine. This made him stand out from the other thinkers. He said,

> "After I encountered Buddhism, I listened to [lectures] and studied it for years, but it was like counting the sand in the sea. I felt dizzy and confused and was trapped in a futile effort. Then I focused on studying scripture and contemplated on its meaning. I sought different sutras and tried to discover the answer while concurrently reading the Tiantai teaching. Then, I found an opening. Not only did I realize that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is the essence of the *Lotus Sutra* but also I saw that Zhiyi realized the original mind of Buddha. How the sutra speaks about the tathāgatagarbha is in accord with the essence of nature-inclusion. How Tiantai speaks about the practice of Cessation and Contemplation (*zhi guan* 止觀) is secretly in accord with the essence of the Great Concentration [of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*]. Even when speaking about the different stages of the process for becoming a Buddha and how to prevent demonic states, in this, the Tiantai teachings are totally united with the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."[152]

As we will see in later chapters, Chuandeng made the sutra relevant to Tiantai and used Tiantai idea to harmonize Tiantai with other schools and, thereby, Chuandeng revived the Tiantai doctrine.

As the major figures in the revival of the late Ming Buddhism, many leading scholar-monks were in agreement upon upholding the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the representative scripture of the reconciliation of all the Buddhist schools. They all wrote commentaries on it and all highly praised its authority. Their advocating the sutra contributed to its popularity directly and indirectly in the late Ming. Many other monks were influenced by them and were devoted to studying this sutra. For example, the monks

---

151 Ibid., 897a.

152 See his *Lengyan jing xuan yi* 楞嚴經玄義, X13: 1c.

known for spreading the Huayan teachings such as Xuelang Hongen 雪浪洪恩 (1545-1608), Yiyu Tongrun 一雨通潤 (1565-1624), Kongyin Zhencheng 空印鎮澄 (1547-1617), and Guanheng Zhuanyu 觀衡顓愚 (1578-1645) are all famous for spreading the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and all wrote commentaries on it. Likewise, famous Chan monks such as Zhanran Yuancheng 湛然圓澄 (1561-1626), Yongjue Yuanxian 永覺元賢(1578-1657), Tianran Hanshi 天然函是 (1608 -1685), and Chaizi Chengshi 柴紫乘時, and the Tiantai monk Chuanru 傳如 (1562-1624) all wrote commentaries on it.[153] No doubt the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* played an important role in reconciling and transcending the different Buddhist schools and became a hallmark of late Ming Buddhism. The intellectual and spiritual dynamic of the late Ming was strongly influenced by the doctrines of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. As a late-Ming Tiantai thinker, it is understandable that Chuandeng was equally influenced by it. As we will see in the following chapters, this all-inclusive and, for some, powerful Buddhist text plays *the* central role in the development of his treatise *On Nature Including Good and Evil.*

---

[153] Tongli, *Lengyan jing zhizhang shu xuan shi* 楞嚴經指掌疏懸示, X16: 10a-b. Yongjue Yuanxian's commentary is *Lengyan jing lve shu* 楞嚴經略疏, X15: no. 302.

PART II

On Nature Including Good and Evil

Chuandeng wrote *On Nature Including Good and Evil* when he was sixty-seven.[1] Systematically presenting the maturity of his thought as a whole, the treatise is divided into three parts: his reinterpretation of Zhiyi's "doctrinal classification" (*pan jiao* 判教); his theory on "Buddha-nature includes good and evil"; and his theory on practicing "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil." Like his predecessors, he added new elements into his developments to respond to contemporary thought. He incorporated Confucianism into the doctrinal classification system and absorbed the teachings of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, both elements reflecting the significant intellectual trend during the late Ming. Chuandeng's thought represented the transformation of nature-inclusion in the Ming. It was his thought that gave life to the Tiantai school in the Ming.

[1] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 374c.

Chapter 6 Doctrinal Classification

A main feature of Chinese Buddhism is the Doctrinal Classification system, which originated in India.[2] Peter Gregory points out that doctrinal classification in Chinese Buddhism serves three interrelated purposes: hermeneutical, sectarian, and soteriological. Hermeneutically, it is a framework in which Buddhist scriptures are chronologically and hierarchically organized in order to form a coherent and consistent doctrine. In the sectarian sense, the various schools arrange these scriptures according to their value judgments to establish the authority of the scripture which is the foundation for the school's legitimacy to claim itself as the supreme teaching. Soteriologically, it is a progressive path along which the practitioner's understanding advances from the elementary to the most profound.[3]

Although there were many classification systems in circulation when Zhiyi created his, it was precisely his system that became the most influential. Hermeneutically, as well as in a sectarian sense, because Zhiyi classified the *Lotus Sutra* as the most authoritative teaching, this allowed Tiantai to claim orthodoxy because it regarded the *Lotus Sutra* as its central scripture. Soteriologically, it is the path by which Buddhists would progress through five successive stages, moving from the most elementary to the most advanced. Zhiyi named his comprehensive classification system the "Five Periods." For Chuandeng, the Five Periods served to legitimate "Buddha-nature includes good and evil" and to make the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* the other authoritative scripture of Tiantai. Chuandeng

---

[2] Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, 105.

[3] Ibid., 115.

reinterpreted Zhiyi's "Five Periods" system in two innovative ways, by focusing on the idea of Buddha-nature includes good and evil and by incorporating Confucian theories about human nature into Tiantai's doctrinal classification. Chuandeng classified the Confucian teaching as "worldly teaching," which is inferior to the Buddhist teaching, for he categorized the latter as "supra-mundane teaching."

The Worldly Teaching

In *Yuan ren lun* 原人論 (*Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity*), Zongmi was probably the first to philosophically broaden the doctrinal classification to include Daoism and Confucianism. He criticized the Daoist and Confucian understandings of the origin of humanity and placed them at the lowest level, "the teaching of men and gods," i.e., the worldly teaching, while at the same time using the idea of True Mind to reconcile Buddhism with Confucianism and Daoism. As Peter Gregory points out, "Tsung-mi's inclusion of the two teachings within his *p'an-chiao* scheme thus enabled him at once to both demonstrate their inferiority to Buddhism and to integrate them within a Buddhist vision."[4] Like Zongmi, Chuandeng's strategy is both to criticize and to integrate Confucianism. The difference, however, is that Zongmi, as the fifth patriarch in both the Huayan and Chan, based his classification on nature-origination thought, while Chuandeng uses nature-inclusion to integrate Confucianism.

In *On Nature Including Good and Evil,* Chuandeng presents his thoughts in a dialogue form between him and a fictitious Confucian visitor who has studied Buddhism. Chuandeng dedicates two-thirds of the dialogue about doctrinal classification to the

---

[4] Ibid., 261.

explanation of Confucian theories on human nature and their deficiencies. In the late Ming, Confucianism was the dominant thought, and there were trends to synthesize both the various schools within Buddhism, as well as between Buddhism and Confucianism. Reviving Tiantai, Chuandeng faced many challenges, including harmonizing the different Buddhist teachings and answering the various inquiries the literati had about Buddhism itself as more and more Confucians were turning to Buddhism in search of a better understanding of the nature of mind.

Chuandeng's Confucian education, evident in his writings, served him well to address all the literati's concerns. An eminent monk had to have a certain level of understanding about Confucianism and the eloquence necessary to carry on discussions with the literati. Chuandeng clearly met these qualifications and used them in his efforts to advance Buddhism in an attempt to surpass the dominant Confucianism. In this part of the dialogue about doctrinal classification, Chuandeng's intention is twofold, to make the connection between the two teachings—that Tiantai Buddhism and early Confucianism never characterize nature by the value judgments of good and evil—and to demonstrate the deficiencies of later Confucian understanding about nature.

The dialogue begins with the perplexed visitor questioning how it is possible to teach people to do good if Tiantai advocates the teaching of inherent evil, because according to what has been taught, evil is to be shunned and good is to be encouraged. Chuandeng acknowledges that ordinary people are afraid when they hear about the idea of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil that Tiantai advocates. They are afraid because they use the worldly teaching to question the profundity of the supra-mundane teaching.[5]

---

[5] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, 375b.

Indeed, in the Ming the idea was unsettling, if not frightening. With the ongoing syncretic dynamics at that time, the concept of reward for doing good and retribution for doing evil were deeply internalized by the general public. For example, in the Ming many popular "morality books" (*shan shu* 善書) and "precious scrolls" (*bao-juan* 寶卷), that fused Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, were written to inculcate moral values. These books used reward and retribution as the basis to convince people to do good and avoid evil.[6] The main teaching of Confucianism is morality, making the idea of inherent evil difficult for Confucians to accept.

Chuandeng begins to assuage his interloper's fears by first defining what is "nature." He says: "Nature is principle *(li*)."[7] Chuandeng relies on "principle," the focus of Neo-Confucianism, to achieve the reconciliation between Buddhism and Confucianism. "Nature" is the common concern of Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism in the Ming. While Buddhism focuses on Buddha-nature, Neo-Confucianism talks about human nature. The Ming government decreed Zhu Xi's thought the core of the official curriculum for state examinations. Zhu Xi considered the "Heaven Principle" which exists prior to all things as the source of all things; thus, the Heaven Principle exists prior to the human mind and is the nature of the human mind. He argued that human social life is dominated by this principle and the principle of social life is embodied in the propriety of the five relationships that depend upon the mind's control over its desires. They are the relationships between the parent and the offspring, between the ruler and the subject, between husband and wife, among siblings, and among friends. Their corresponding

---

[6] Overmyer, *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 385.

[7] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 375a.

principles are benevolence (*ren* 仁), righteousness (*yi* 義), propriety (*li* 禮), wisdom (*zhi* 智), and integrity (*xin* 信). By eliminating human desires from the mind, society will manifest the Heaven Principle. Zhu Xi's Heaven Principle as the nature of both the human mind and social harmony was used by the Ming government as an important tool to establish social order.[8]

After the mid-Ming, Wang Yangming redefined the Principle from that of the heavenly to that of the mind. Accordingly, the mind is principle and the principle is inherent in the mind. Wang also emphasized that the principle is the essence of social moral conduct. He followed Zhu Xi to stress that the principle of social life can manifest when human desire is eliminated thereby returning to the mind-nature. Both their thoughts focused on the principle of mind as the principle of social morality. Their difference, however, is that for Zhu Xi, the principle of social morality is prior to the mind, but for Wang, the mind is prior to the principle of social morality. Nevertheless, both Zhu and Wang agreed that principle is the main component of Neo-Confucianism. This thinking on the principle of social morality as mind-nature extensively influenced the literati and society at large in the Ming.

This idea also influenced how Chuandeng managed his monastery. He laid down six essential rules for monastic reform after rebuilding the Gaoming monastery. They were to "be filial to parents, show respect to the elders, be harmonious with neighbors, educate offspring, make a livelihood in accordance with principle, do not engage in lawless activities."[9] These six rules highlighted the social relationships which he reinterpreted as

---

[8] Twitchett ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 8, 709.

[9] Chuandeng, *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志, 74-75.

the monastic relationship: the parents as the teachers who hold the ordination ritual, the elders as the senior monks, the neighbors as the monastic order, the offspring as the disciples, the principle of livelihood as monastic studies, and the lawless activities as the target of discipline. Thus, Chuandeng's monastic reform also embodied the principle of social morality.

The central reason why Chuandeng defines nature as principle is because he wants to introduce the dynamics of principle/phenomena (*li/shi*), i.e., essence/function (*ti/yong*) or nature/practice (*xing/xiu*) into his broader explanation of nature-inclusion:

> "As principle, nature is originally neither good nor evil. Those arguments that the ancient and contemporary thinkers consider [nature] as good or evil are no more than discussing nature through practice (*xiu*), illuminating principle (*li*) through phenomena (*shi*). It is just like seeking sound by following its echo and looking for form by following its shadow. Since nature is principle, how can good and evil be sufficient in describing it?"[10]

In Chinese Buddhism, Buddha-nature is understood as the principle-essence (*li ti* 理體) that points to Reality. Maintaining that nature itself as principle cannot be defined as good or evil and that it transcends both good and evil, Chuandeng says, "As principle, nature is originally neither good nor evil;" and, "Since nature is principle, how can good and evil be sufficient in describing it?" Although claiming that nature is not evil may have helped to alleviate the people's fear, he nevertheless does not mean to deny the Tiantai idea of Buddha-nature including the good and the evil. Chuandeng just wants to show that nature as Middle Way Reality transcends the worldly moral judgments of good and evil.

The idea that nature itself "is" good or "is" evil is entirely different from the idea that nature "possesses" good or "possesses" evil. Yet, if nature cannot be characterized by

---

[10] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 375a.

the value judgments of good and evil, how does Chuandeng describe nature? He invokes Zhanran's argument that nature can be illuminated through the aspect of practice (*xiu*) (the phenomenal world). For Zhanran, the relationship between nature and practice is "essence and function" or "principle and phenomena." Thus for Chuandeng, nature without the value judgment of good and evil is the essence (*ti)* of cultivated good and cultivated evil and can manifest as practice (function). Since nature manifests as practice, nature thus needs to be understood through practice; and because phenomena has both good and evil, nature, as the essence of phenomena, inevitably includes both good and evil. As Chuandeng says, "Therefore, we should talk about nature through practice. Since there is good and evil in the practice, how could nature be without?"[11]

Through this understanding, Chuandeng further defines Tiantai's idea of nature:

> "When Tiantai speak of nature, the good and the evil are included in it inherently. When speaking of practice, the good and the evil then become differentiated. Inherent good means that the Buddha-realm is originally included, while inherent evil means that the nine realms are originally included. When the Buddha-realm is fulfilled (manifested) through practice, it is cultivated good. When the nine realms are fulfilled through practice, it is cultivated evil."[12]

Following Zhiyi, Chuandeng regards the Buddha-realm as good and the nine realms as evil. The manifestations of the ten realms are the phenomenal activities of nature and they can be judged by the values of good and evil. When tracing the manifestations back to nature, nature forcibly includes the evil of the nine realms (the inherent evil) so that nature can manifest the phenomena of the nine realms (the cultivated evil). Likewise, nature must include the good of the Buddha-realm (the inherent good) so that it can manifest the phenomena of the Buddha realm (the cultivated good). For this reason,

---

[11] Ibid., X57: 376b.

[12] Ibid., X57: 375b.

nature inherently includes the good and the evil but they are not the good and evil as understood according to value judgment.

Chuandeng's emphasis on the dynamics of nature and practice when approaching the topic of nature helps to clarify possible misperceptions of inherent evil held by common men. Inherent evil does not mean that nature is evil; rather it means that nature *possesses* evil. By this definition, he demonstrates the supra-mundane character and consequent superiority of Tiantai. Because Confucians use value judgment when speaking about nature, Chuandeng assigns all Confucian theories about human nature to the phenomenal level or worldly category.

Chuandeng wants to remind people that Tiantai does not only talk about inherent evil, it also talks about inherent good. He points out that the purpose of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is to help people reach inherent good, whereas Zhili emphasizes that the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is to teach people to reach inherent evil. Since nature possesses both good and evil, it is impossible to cut off the evil of the nine realms to reach the good of the Buddha realm. For this reason, the sentient beings of the nine realms need to understand inherent evil directly through the cultivated evil, for then they will realize the inherent good through inherent evil because both inherent evil and inherent good are mutually included each other. Thus, the unity of good and evil is the ultimate good and the ultimate principle.[13] For Chuandeng, it is natural that people are unsettled by this idea. He says, "Ultimate principle shocks people. Supreme words are too fearsome to hear. If you use the trifling worldly teaching to doubt the supra-mundane

---

[13] Ibid.

profound principle, it is not surprising that you feel confused and are shocked."[14] He maintains the superiority of Buddhism over Confucianism because Confucians cannot understand the ultimate principle.

Chuandeng's Confucian visitor questions the originality of Tiantai's idea. Since Tiantai claims that nature includes both good and evil and can manifest the values of good and evil only in the aspect of phenomena, doesn't this just show that Tiantai absorbed the three major Confucian theories on human nature into its idea to boast it as its own and as the best?[15] Chuandeng answers by explaining the Confucian theory on human nature and in the process singles out its theoretical defaults. The three famous theories are: "human nature is good" developed by Mencius 孟子 (371-289 BCE); "human nature is evil" claimed by Xunzi 荀子 (300–230 BCE); and "human nature is a blend of good and evil" advocated by Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE). Most theories about human nature developed by later Confucian thinkers are based on these three theories with minor modifications. Chuandeng then proceeds to show the fundamental differences between Confucianism and Buddhism in his answer.

Chuandeng does not entirely discount Confucianism. Rather, Chuandeng depicts Confucius as a person who knew that nature includes good and evil. He argues that Confucius never judged nature by using good or evil and barely talks about nature.[16] In fact, Confucius said, "By nature, men are alike. By practice, they become wide apart." For Chuandeng, Confucius' idea accorded with the idea that only the aspect of practice

---

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 375c.

has the value judgments of good and evil. He believes that Confucius knew the relationship of nature and practice to be that of essence and function. Furthermore, Confucius classified humans into three levels, the wise, the average, and the simpleminded. The wise and the simpleminded cannot change to another level, but the average can change to the level of the wise or to the level of the simpleminded. Chuandeng concludes that Confucius' classification is based not on nature but rather it is based on human ability attained by cultivation. Chuandeng considers that Confucius' idea of the average is at a certain level consistent with Tiantai teachings. Chuandeng says, "If nature does not possess good, how can the [average] one become this (the wise)? … If nature does not possess evil, how can the [average] one become this (the simpleminded)?"[17] Therefore, Chuandeng argues that although Confucius did not mention the Tiantai idea, Confucius' thought indicates that nature includes both good and evil.[18] For him, Confucius never characterized nature with the value judgments of good and evil.

Not only Confucius, but also his grandson Zisi 子思 (483-402 BC) is depicted by Chuandeng as a person who knew well the idea that nature includes good and evil and never described nature by the value judgments of good and evil. Chuandeng attributes the *Doctrine of the Mean* to Zisi. The definition of nature in this text says, "What heaven confers is called nature. Accordance with this nature is called the Way. Cultivating this Way is called education." The Way can fully embody nature. The process of embodying nature is education. For Chuandeng, this implies that nature and the Way have the

---

[17] Ibid., 376b.

[18] Ibid.

relationship of essence and function. Chuandeng uses “the Mean” and “the Harmony” discussed in the text to further explain the relationship. According to the text, “the Mean” (*zhong* 中), which is the origin of the universe, is when joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure have not yet arisen. “Harmony” (*he* 和), which is the accomplishment of the Way, is when all those feelings arise to their appropriate levels. Chuandeng considers that “the Mean” is nature as essence and “Harmony,” as the manifestation of the Way, is cultivated good as function. Chuandeng further deduces that when those emotions arise to the inappropriate levels, it is called “disharmony” and the manifestation of disharmony is cultivated evil. By tracing back to nature, Chuandeng concludes that nature necessarily includes both good and evil: “The harmony and disharmony of [emotions such as] joy and anger is no more than what issues from nature. Doesn’t this mean that nature inherently possesses both good and evil?”[19] For this reason, Chuandeng argues that Zisi’s thought insightfully illuminates the thinking of Confucius. In other words, both Confucius and Zisi knew about the idea that nature includes good and evil and never judged nature by the values of good and evil.[20]

Staying consistent with the trend of syncretism, Chuandeng unifies Buddhism and Confucianism through Tiantai teaching. In the preface of his treatise he writes, “The [supreme] Way contains Confucianism and Buddhism.”[21] Chuandeng’s lay-disciple, scholar Wang Shichang 王士昌, mentioned that one of the reasons why Chuandeng wrote *On Nature Including Good and Evil* is that “Buddhism and Confucianism have

---

[19] Ibid., 376c.

[20] Ibid., 375c.

[21] Ibid., 374c.

theories on good and evil by nature, but up to now both have failed to reach a reconciliation."[22] Chuandeng's unification of the two teachings through the Tiantai idea that nature includes good and evil is a significant feature of his Tiantai thought.

After all, Chuandeng's purpose for reconciling the two teachings is to prove the deficiencies of Confucianism. He criticizes all the Confucian thinkers who come after Zisi for distorting the original idea of Confucius and for regarding nature as either good or evil, which carries heavy value judgments. Chuandeng says that Mencius was the first among them who argued that human nature is good. This view then became the mainstream of human nature theory in Chinese philosophy. Chuandeng asserts that Mencius misinterpreted Zisi's thought saying that although Mencius learned "the Way" (*dao* 道) from Zisi, he never really understood why it is called the Way. For Chuandeng, Mencius never understood that the Way means nature including both good and evil. Accordingly, Mencius thus proposed the idea that "everyone can be Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 (the names of two sage-rulers in ancient China)," to encourage people to do good. For Chuandeng, it is correct to educate people to do good. He criticizes Mencius, however, saying, "Since people in the world are all different, it is wrong to dogmatically claim that nature is good."[23] That is, Mencius' biased view reduces the original thought of Confucius and Zisi. Chuandeng's intention is to show that Mencius wrongly characterized nature by the value judgment of good. He declares that Mencius' limited view was the cause that led later Confucian thinkers to deliberate on human nature.[24]

---

[22] See his "Shou seng deng qi zhi xu" 壽僧燈七秩序, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 563.

[23] See his *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 376c.

[24] Ibid., 375c.

To counter Mencius, Xunzi presented his idea that human nature is evil. Chuandeng claims that Xunzi took pleasure in raising objections against Mencius and thus characterized nature as evil. Contrary to Mencius' idea that "everyone can be Yao and Shun," Xunzi held that "[the evil deeds of] Jie 桀 and Zhou 紂 (the names of two wicked rulers in ancient China) are nature. [The good deeds of] Yao and Shun are artificial (*wei* 偽)." This means that evil, as in the deeds of Jie and Zhou, is inborn, while goodness, as in the deeds of Yao and Shun, is acquired and thus artificial. Xunzi gave a reason for the source of human evil deeds but his main purpose was to educate people to do good. Xunzi believed that through acquired practice people could transform their inborn evil and become sages. Xunzi condemned Zisi and Mencius because their views caused chaos in the world. Why? Because if nature is good, people will not learn to do good and will do evil that will lead the world to chaos. Chuandeng charges that Xunzi was arrogant and intransigent for saying that Mencius and Zisi were the cause of chaos in the world simply because he wanted to conclude that nature is evil.[25] For Chuandeng, Xunzi's view not only neglected the inborn good but incorrectly characterized nature by the value judgment of evil.

After Xunzi, Yang Xiong proposed that nature is a blend of good and evil. Chuandeng also considers Yang as someone who took pleasure in raising objections and thereby combined the theories of Mencius and Xunzi in order to surpass both. Yang's idea was that cultivating the good tendencies makes a person good, while cultivating the evil tendencies makes a person evil.[26] In other words, nature is the source of good and evil.

---

[25] Ibidi., 376a.

[26] See his *Fayan* 法言, chapter 3, Han Jing, *Fa yan quan yi* 法言全譯, 100.

This theory gets very close to the Tiantai idea of inherent good and inherent evil. This is why Chuandeng comments that "only Yang's theory of human nature as a blend of good and evil is close to the principle."[27] Chuandeng, however, also criticizes Yang's theoretical defects, "Yang Xiong does not know that good and evil is [the function] that nature can do and that it is not [the value judgments] that nature can have. Moreover, as far as nature is concerned, how can we judge it as good or evil?"[28] Chuandeng sees that Yang mistakenly believed that nature has the blend of good and evil as the fundamental character rather than seeing the latter as the function of nature. For Chuandeng, Yang's faults are the same as that of Mencius and Xunzi. Because "everyone can be Yao and Shun" means the manifestation of cultivated good. Good is a function of nature but not the fundamental character of nature. Likewise, if "everyone can be Jie and Zhou," this means the manifestation of cultivated evil. Evil is a function of nature but not the fundamental character of nature.

After Yang, many theories on human nature appeared based on these three ideas. Among them, the theory of Han Yu 韓愈 (768-842) is representative. During the Tang period in which he lived, Confucians felt the pressure of the popularity of Buddhism. Han Yu then made an effort to continue Confucian orthodoxy (*dao tong* 道統) by redefining human nature in response to the mind-nature idea of Buddhism. Chuandeng criticizes his theory harshly.

For Han Yu, there are three grades of human nature, the superior, the inferior, and the average, and different people have different natures. The superior human nature is

---

[27] See his *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 376b.

[28] Ibid., p.376a.

completely good. The inferior human nature is completely evil. The average human nature can be either good or evil, that is, it is a blend of good and evil. Chuandeng criticizes Han Yu's view of "nature" for adopting and combining the three theories of Mencius, Xunzi, and Yang Xiong to explain the Confucian theory of the three categories of men. According to Chuandeng, Han Yu's view that the average nature can advance to the superior good nature was borrowed from Mencius' theory. That the average nature can degenerate into the inferior evil nature, on the other hand, derives from Xunzi's idea. That the average nature can be good or evil incorporates Yang's view. For Chuandeng, the rationale for Han Yu's system of human nature was his wish to surpass the theories of Mencius, Xunzi, and Yang. Because the latter only addressed the unfixed character of the average human (who can move up to good or down to evil) as defined by Confucius and neglected to address the wise and the simpleminded, whose status, as defined by Confucius, are fixed (the wise are always wise, the simpleminded are always simpleminded). Han then classified nature into three grades in order to include all three categories (wise, average, and simpleminded) of humans discussed by Confucius.

Chuandeng criticizes Han for "regarding abilities (*cai* 才) as nature."[29] This is because Han did not understand that the categories Confucius referred to are about *ability*, which is a function of nature, and not nature itself. Therefore, Han's idea departs from nature and is, in fact, not about nature at all. Chuandeng then argues that not only Han but also all the later Confucian thinkers who talked about nature made the same mistake of confusing nature with ability, the function of nature. And this is why the numerous

[29] Ibid.

theories are all in disagreement.[30]

Chuandeng points out another theoretical mistake committed by Han Yu, that "what is separate from nature are emotions (*qing* 情)."[31] Han Yu considered the seven emotions, joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and desire, to be unrelated to nature. That is, nature has no relationship with the function of nature. More precisely, Chuandeng criticizes Han for not understanding that the relationship between nature and emotion is that of essence and function. Thus, Chuandeng points out the fundamental difference between the ideas of nature as discussed by Confucianism and by Buddhism: "The nature that Confucianism is referring to differs from that of our Buddhism. Since Confucianism describes [nature as] good or evil, [then] the emotion [that can be described as good or evil] is, in fact, what Confucianism believes to be the so-called nature."[32] For Chuandeng, Buddhism does not characterize nature with the value judgments of good and evil, while Confucianism does. This is why the nature Confucianism articulates is not the true nature but falls into the same category as emotion, i.e., the aspect of practice (function).

Furthermore, Chuandeng declares that the relationship between nature and emotion is that of essence and function. To prove his point, Chuandeng cites another Confucian viewpoint: if the sages and the villains do not have the seven emotions, they cannot become sages or villains. Based on this idea, Chuandeng holds that, "the sages by managing these emotions, joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, and desire, turn them into the good, while the villains when incorrectly managing these seven emotions, turn them into the evil. Doesn't this indicate that good and evil are the [functions] nature can do and that

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 376b.

they are not the fundamental character that nature can have."[33] Chuandeng argues that the seven emotions can be good or evil because they are the function of nature but not the fundamental character of nature. Therefore, Chuandeng rejects Han's idea that emotion is irrelevant to nature. Rather, it is the manifestation of nature, and their relationship is essence and function.

Chuandeng goes on to criticize Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077), a forerunner of Neo-Confucianism. Before Zhang Zai, almost all theories on human nature regarded nature as an integrated whole. He was the first Confucian to divide nature into two parts, the heavenly nature (*tiandi zhi xing* 天地之性) and the physical nature (*qizhi zhi xing* 氣質之性). All humans are born with these two natures. The heavenly nature is the original nature of all things and exists prior to all things. The physical nature, which each particular individual receives at birth, is the combination of the different kinds of *qi* (cosmic energy) and is specific to each individual. The heavenly nature is purely good, while the physical nature is a blend of good and evil and the source of evil. Zhang Zai argued that by transforming the impure physical nature, i.e., by getting rid of evil through cultivation, one can return to the pure heavenly nature. This theory had a great impact on Neo-Confucianism and Zhu Xi's idea of eliminating human desire to manifest principle was developed from it.

Just as he does with the other Confucian thinkers, Chuandeng criticizes Zhang Zai for not understanding nature. Chuandeng says, "Since the definition of nature is immutability, how could there be a distinction between the heavenly nature and the

[33] Ibid.

physical nature?"[34] Considering that both the heavenly nature and the physical nature are nature, both should be identical and unchanging. Moreover, Chuandeng reproaches Zhang Zai because his theory is in opposition to the relationship of essence and function. Chuandeng argues that since the physical nature also derives from the heavenly nature, "then the heavenly nature is essence and the physical nature is its function. Function works only when essence exists. How could it be possible that essence possesses good alone and its function can manifest both good and evil?"[35] In other words, if the essence does not contain evil, how can it manifest evil? Thereby, Chuandeng denounces Zhang's idea about two natures to be completely inconsistent.

There are many more Confucian theories of human nature than the ones Chuandeng picks to criticize. Chuandeng's criticisms, however, are aimed at those more relevant theories to demonstrate the superiority of Buddhism over Confucianism. As Chuandeng mentions in his preface, "The supra-mundane doctrine and the worldly doctrine [cannot be confused,] I cannot but show their distinctions are as far apart as heaven is from earth."[36] For Chuandeng, the main difference between the two teachings is that the Confucian theory of human nature mistakes cultivated good and cultivated evil for nature itself. The theories of Mencius, Xunzi, and Yang Xiong, the foundation for Confucian theory of human nature, all made the same mistake. They all mischaracterized phenomena as nature and do not address nature at all. As Chuandeng says, "They all use 'abilities' and 'emotion' to discuss nature. [In fact], they do not use nature at all to talk

---

[34] Ibid., 376c.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 374c.

about nature."[37] Mencius, Xunzi, and Yang, together with later Confucian thinkers, all incorrectly limited nature by the judgmental values of cultivated good or cultivated evil and neglected to address the complete picture of nature. For this reason, Chuandeng disparages the Confucian theory of human nature as something Buddhism disapproves of and would never use this kind of theory to define nature.[38] In contrast, Tiantai focuses on nature by seeing it through the aspects of essence and function. Nature is not the value judgments of cultivated good and cultivated evil. Rather, nature itself is the essence of cultivated good and cultivated evil and can manifest as cultivated good and cultivated evil. That is, nature "includes" good and evil rather than nature "is" good and evil."

Another difference Chuandeng wants to illustrate is that Confucianism only talks about the nature of the human realm, while Tiantai addresses the nature of all the ten realms of the universe. Here is the distinction between the worldly teaching and supra-mundane teaching. He says, "Furthermore, [Confucianism] uses 'ability' and 'emotion' of the human realm to discuss nature. Yet, [ability and emotion] are not the good and the evil of the ten realms inherent in nature as claimed by Tiantai."[39] The Confucian failure not only takes "ability" and "emotion" to be nature but it also restricts nature to the "ability" and "emotion" of the human realm. Instead, Tiantai not only talks about the nature of the human realm but also the Buddha-nature of the ten realms. Buddha-nature contains the good and the evil of the ten realms and is itself the essence of them, so it can manifest the cultivated good and the cultivated evil of the ten realms. For Chuandeng, the Tiantai idea not only illuminates the ultimate nature but also goes beyond

---

[37] Ibid., 375b.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

the worldly teaching. This is why Chuandeng classifies Confucianism as the lowest category of "the worldly teaching."

The Supra-mundane Teaching—The Five Periods

Like his predecessors, Chuandeng wants to stress that the highest doctrine in Buddhism is the Tiantai idea of inherent evil, i.e., Buddha-nature includes good and evil. But he does something new. Chuandeng is the first Tiantai thinker to reinterpret the Five Periods system by the idea of inherent evil. Because the idea of inherent evil had become the hallmark of Tiantai, Chuandeng finds it necessary to reinterpret Zhiyi's entire "Five Periods" system in order to establish the supremacy of inherent evil. Zhiyi had set up the Five Periods to demonstrate that the *Lotus Sutra* was the supreme teaching of the Buddha and focused on the Threefold Truth. Chuandeng significantly shifts the focus from the Threefold Truth to make inherent evil the supreme teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* as given by the Buddha throughout his life.

The Five Periods system was Zhiyi's way to judge and rank all Buddhist scriptures believed to be taught by the Buddha. Due to many contradictions between different teachings in the scriptures imported to China from India, Zhiyi wanted to show that they were not only consistent with but also complementary to each other. He believed that the inconsistencies of the scriptures were the skillful means the Buddha intentionally used to teach sentient beings of different capacities. According to Zhiyi, there were ten well-known doctrinal classification systems in his time, so called "three in the south and seven in the north" *(nan san bei qi* 南三北七).[40] Zhiyi criticized all the ten systems for

[40] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 801a-b.

not thoroughly analyzing all the scriptures. Nonetheless, he integrated the relevant parts of these systems into his own to create the Five Periods.[41]

While Zhiyi's Five Periods proposes a consistent and complementary arrangement of the scriptures according to the lifetime of the Buddha, it simultaneously shows the process of the five successive stages by which a sentient being of the dullest capacity can progress on the path toward Buddhahood. Zhiyi borrowed from the parable of the five flavors found in the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*, commonly called the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, to shape the Five Periods. The teaching of each period is analogous to each of the five flavors, milk, cream, butter, melted butter, and ghee, the five successive stages of refining milk into ghee.[42] The ultimate teaching is likened to the ghee of the fifth stage. The dullest sentient being can eventually realize this ultimate teaching by progressively learning the teachings of the five periods.

The first period is the "Avataṃsaka period" (*Huayan shi* 華嚴時), the first twenty-one days after the Buddha's enlightenment. The Buddha directly expounded the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the supreme wisdom he realized, to the Mahāyāna bodhisattvas. But the beings of the dullest capacity, i.e., those of the Hīnayāna, did not understand the teaching at all. The second period is the "Āgama period" (*Ahan shi* 阿含時), the twelve years during which the Buddha preached all the *Āgama Sūtras* to the Hīnayānists. Since they were too dull to understand the supreme teachings directly, the Buddha taught the *Āgama Sutras* as a skillful means to help them first reach the Hīnayāna wisdom. The third period is the "Vaipulya period" (*Fangdeng shi* 方等時), the eight years the Buddha

---

41 Pan, *Zhiyi Ping Zhuan* 智顗評傳, 370-75.

42 *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*, T12: 690c- 691a.

broadly taught the Mahāyāna sutras. In order to convert Hīnayānists to the Mahāyāna, the Buddha denounced the Hīnayāna doctrine and praised the Mahāyāna teachings to point out the superiority of Mahāyāna. The fourth period is the "Prajñā period" (*Bore shi* 般若時), the twenty-two years during which the Buddha taught the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras*. Because those who accepted the Mahāyāna teachings still did not fully understand it, the Buddha broadly taught the truth of Emptiness.

The fifth period is the "Lotus and Nirvāṇa period" (*Fahua niepan shi* 法華涅槃時), the last eight years in which the Buddha taught the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*. Seeing that the dullest sentient beings had gone through the previous four stages and that they were ready to fully realize the supreme teachings, the Buddha directly taught the *Lotus Sutra*. In the *Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha showed that both the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna teachings are provisional and that both are subsumed in One Vehicle, i.e., the Buddha Vehicle, making all of the teachings the ultimate teaching. The Buddha Vehicle represents the idea that all sentient beings eventually will become Buddhas. Zhiyi regarded the Buddha Vehicle as the ultimate teaching that the Buddha taught throughout his life. For this reason, Zhiyi claimed the sutra to be the fundamental text of the Tiantai. In addition, the Buddha preached the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* the day and the night before he entered nirvāṇa. To those who did not fully understand what he taught in the *Lotus Sutra,* the Buddha repeated all the teachings he had given before and again revealed them to be the ultimate teachings of the Buddha Vehicle. For Zhiyi, the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* serves to support the *Lotus Sutra* and only the *Lotus Sutra* is the perfect ultimate teaching.[43]

Zhiyi's intention of establishing the Five Periods was to present the supreme status

---

[43] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 800b.

of the *Lotus Sutra* as well as that of the Tiantai. He said,

> "When disseminating the other sutras without explaining their doctrinal classification, there is no harm to the meaning. When advocating the *Lotus Sutra*, the meaning matters if doctrinal classification is not explained."[44]

In other words, his purpose for classifying the scriptures was for the sake of spreading the *Lotus Sutra*. Zhiyi asserted that the reason why the *Lotus Sutra* surpasses the other sutras is that it plays a significant role in **"opening the provisional to reveal the true"** (*kai quan xian shi* 開權顯實).[45]

For Zhiyi, this role stems from the *Lotus Sutra* itself because the sutra has elements of doctrinal classification as well. The Buddha ranked the teaching he was giving in the *Lotus Sutra* as "true" (*shi* 實) and named it the One Vehicle. All the teachings taught before the *Lotus Sutra* were provisionally divided by the Buddha into three vehicles, the Śrāvaka, the Pratyeka-buddha, and the Bodhisattva, so as to educate sentient beings of different capacities.[46] The distinct teachings of the three vehicles are meant to be "provisional" (*quan* 權) and only the teaching of the One Vehicle as taught in the *Lotus Sutra* is the "true" teaching.[47] In the *Lotus Sutra,* the Buddha divided the teachings he gave during his lifetime into three periods, the first, the middle, and the last. The teachings of the three periods respectively correspond to the doctrines of the Three Vehicles, the Śrāvaka, the Pratyekabuddha, and the Bodhisattva.[48] The first two are categorized as Hīnayāna and are referred to as the "Two Vehicles" (*er sheng* 二乘),

---

44 Ibid., 800a.

45 See his *Weimo jing xuan shu* 維摩經玄疏, T38: 561c.

46 *Lotus Sutra* 妙法蓮華經, T9: 26a.

47 Ibid., 7b.

48 Ibid., 3c.

because the Hīnayānists are centered on self-salvation. The Bodhisattva Vehicle is referred to as Mahāyāna, because Mahāyānists are centered on the salvation of all beings. In the sutra, the Mahāyāna is also referred to as the Buddha Vehicle (*fo sheng* 佛乘).

This judgment does not mean to deny the Two Vehicles. Rather, it reveals that all Three Vehicles are eventually subsumed by the One Vehicle. In other words, the sutra regards all sentient beings of different capacities as the Buddha Vehicle. According to the *Lotus Sutra*, everyone will eventually become a Buddha. The provisional teachings set up by the Buddha are intended to lead all beings into the path toward Buddhahood. Even those who are still studying the provisional teachings and do not know that they themselves will eventually become Buddhas are actually on the path toward Buddhahood and are actually all in the Buddha Vehicle.[49] There is no distinction between the provisional and true teachings, and there is no distinction between the capacities of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, for all the sentient beings of Three Vehicles have exactly the capacity of the One Vehicle.[50] Thus, according to the *Lotus Sutra*, all the provisional teachings are the true teaching.[51]

This is the *Lotus Sutra*'s unique view of doctrinal classification. Zhiyi asserted that the *Lotus Sutra* conveys the supreme teachings of the One Vehicle, thus playing the role of "opening the provisional to reveal the true" in the fifth period. The sutra opens the provisional teachings to show that they are the true teachings. Therefore, the sutra is neither taught for sentient beings of certain capacity nor is it limited to certain provisional teachings; it simply reveals the true teachings to all sentient beings. The sutra unifies all

---

[49] Ibid., 20b.

[50] Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianlua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 684c.

[51] Ibid., 684c.

the provisional teachings of the Three Vehicles into the true teachings of the One Vehicle and reconciles their contradictions. Zhiyi also said the role of the sutra is "to unite the three vehicles in one" (*hui san gui yi* 會三歸一). Thus, the *Lotus Sutra* is beyond the level of the other sutras. All the other sutras are given provisionally to the sentient beings of certain capacity and they cannot simultaneously teach all sentient beings of different capacities.

Within the Five Periods, Zhiyi ranked the scriptures according to the Four Teachings as mentioned in chapter three. The Four Teachings system serves to further support the role the *Lotus Sutra* plays in the fifth period of "opening the provisional to reveal the true." The Four Teachings system is the backbone of his doctrinal classification system as well as the basis for Chuandeng's reinterpretation of the Five Periods. In terms of the true and the provisional, Zhiyi regarded the Tripiṭaka, the Common, and the Separate Teachings as the provisional and considered only the Round Teaching as the true. The Tripiṭaka is referred to as the Hīnayāna teachings and, in terms of the Threefold Truth, Zhiyi maintained that it is only about the Empty Truth of all things and not about the Provisional and the Middle Truths. Zhiyi called it the doctrine of "Exclusive Emptiness" (*dan zhong* 但空). The Common is the teaching that the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna have in common. Zhiyi held that it is about both the Empty and the Provisional Truths of all things. Yet those of dull capacity who only realize the Empty but not the Provisional are the Hīnayāna and those who realize both are the Mahāyāna.[52] The Separate Teaching is particularly taught only for the Mahāyāna bodhisattvas, referring to the Middle but claiming it to be outside the Empty and the Provisional. Zhiyi called this doctrine the

[52] Ibid., 682c.

"Exclusive Middle" (*dan zhong* 但中). The Round Teaching is the supreme teaching of the Mahāyāna, the Threefold Truth, i.e., the Middle Way of Buddha-nature that all things are Reality and are included in nature. For Zhiyi, it is the true teaching of the One Vehicle taught in the *Lotus Sutra*.

Nevertheless, other sutras such as the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* also contain the Round Teaching. In order to differentiate them for the *Lotus Sutra*, Zhiyi explained the relationship between the Five Periods and the Four teachings to assert the supreme status of the *Lotus Sutra*. For the first period, Zhiyi said, "the immediate teachings the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* taught are the Separate and the Round." For Zhiyi, the sutra contains the Round because it teaches the wisdom of the Buddha's enlightenment; and to a lesser degree, it contains the Separate because it is only addressed to Mahāyānists. For the second period, Zhiyi argued that "the Hīnayāna sutras are only about the Tripiṭaka," because in this period the sutras are only addressed to the Hīnayānists. For the third period, he held that "the Mahāyāna sutras of the Vaipulya period taught all the Four Teachings," because the Buddha wanted to convert the Hīnayānists into Mahāyānists. For the fourth period, Zhiyi maintained that "all the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* use the Common, the Separate and the Round Teachings." The *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* teach Mahāyāna Emptiness. If the teaching is about the shared Empty Truth of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, it is the Common. If it is not about the shared Empty Truth, it is the Separate and the Round Teachings. For the fifth period, Zhiyi believed that "the *Lotus Sutra* only taught the Round Teaching." Since the sutra no longer uses provisional teachings, it only teaches the purely Round Teaching of the Threefold Truth. As for the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, it repeats all the Four Teachings the Buddha

gave leading up to the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* in order to lead those who did not realize the *Lotus Sutra* to the nirvāṇa of Buddha-nature.[53]

According to the above relationship between the Four Teachings and Five Periods, Zhiyi claimed that unlike other sutras, the *Lotus Sutra* alone is the pure Round Teaching. He said, "The *Lotus Sutra* opens the provisional to reveal the true. The straight way (One Vehicle) discards the skillful means (the provisional teaching) and gives the one pure Round Teaching."[54] Zhiyi drew a line between the *Lotus Sutra* and the other sutras that contain the Round and simultaneously contain the other three provisional teachings.

While Zhiyi ensured the supreme status of the *Lotus Sutra* by the Five Periods, Chuandeng reinterprets the Five Periods to demonstrate that inherent evil is the supreme teaching. Zhiyi originally emphasized the Threefold Truth as the Round Teaching. Starting from Zhanran, the idea of good and evil inherent in nature gradually begins to represent the Round Teaching,[55] and Zhili made it the hallmark of Tiantai. Huaize further asserted that it is discussed in the *Lotus Sutra* and that it is the Mind-Seal of the Buddha. This legacy provides Chuandeng with the foundation for his entire theoretical framework beginning with the reinterpretation of the Five Periods.

Chuandeng makes inherent evil the focus of his reinterpretation of the Five Periods saying that inherent evil is the true teaching that the Buddha taught throughout his lifetime, later revealing it to all sentient beings in the fifth period. To prove his theory, Chuandeng makes use of the relationship between the Five Periods and the Four

---

[53] See his *Si jiao yi* 四教義, T46: 725a.

[54] Ibid., 768a.

[55] See his *Zhi quan fu xing chuan hong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, T46: 289c.

Teachings proposed by Zhiyi.[56] Chuandeng shifts the emphasis of the Round Teaching from that of the Threefold Truth to that of inherent good and inherent evil. According to Zhiyi, the teachings of the first period include the Separate and Round Teachings. Chuandeng explains the difference between the Separate and the Round from the angle of the ten realms. He argues that the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* includes the Separate because the sutra contains the teaching that Buddha-nature only includes the good of the Buddha realm but not the evil of the nine realms. The Buddha-nature is thus apart from the nine realms and has to cut off the evil of the nine realms to show the good of the Buddha realm.[57]

The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* has Round teaching because it contains the teaching that Buddha-nature includes the ten realms. Chuandeng refers to several passages from the sutra to support inherent good and inherent evil. For example, Chuandeng says, “The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* translated in the Jin dynasty says that ‘[Suchness] can follow the pure and impure conditions to become the ten realms.’ It also says, ‘like a painter, the mind can shape a variety of five aggregates. All things of this world are shaped by the mind.’”[58] For Chuandeng, these lines provide the evidence that the idea of nature includes the good and the evil is taught in the first period. At first glance, these selections seem to be only about the ten realms arising from the mind and seem not to mention the idea of inherent good and inherent evil. But in Chuandeng’s view, all things that arise from the mind must be inherently included in nature thus all things can be manifested. The good of the Buddha realm and the evil of the nine realms are indeed inherent in

---

[56] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 377a.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

Buddha-nature (Suchness), so when they manifest from the mind they become cultivated good and cultivated evil.[59] Although the teachings of the sutra in this period are not the pure Round Teaching, the sutra still presents the idea of inherent good and inherent evil.

According to Zhiyi, in the second period, the Buddha only gave the Tripiṭaka teaching to the Hīnayāna. Chuandeng considers this period a period in which the Buddha did not teach about inherent good and inherent evil. Chuandeng analyzes the Tripiṭaka teaching through the lens of the ten realms. For Chuandeng, "The realms [of this teaching] have only eight realms. This [teaching] is only about the structure [of the eight realms]. How could it understand the ten realms inherent in nature?"[60] According to Zhiyi, the Tripiṭaka Teaching is only about the Empty Truth but not about the Provisional and Middle Truths. Therefore, the Hīnayānists view the structure of the universe as having only eight realms without the bodhisattva and Buddha realms. This is because they do not know the teachings of the Provisional and Middle Truths. This incomplete view of the universe does not allow for the idea of the ten realms inherent in Buddha-nature. By simply stressing their view of the structure of the universe, Chuandeng points out that they lack the understanding of the ten realms inherent in Buddha-nature and thus the Buddha did not teach inherent evil in this period.

Chuandeng argues that in the third period, "the Buddha taught nature-inclusion and the Dharma-gate of inherent evil thoroughly and abundantly."[61] According to Zhiyi, the various Mahāyāna sutras of this period speak of all Four Teachings. The Buddha pointed out the superiority of the Mahāyāna by comparing it to the Hīnayāna. For Chuandeng, the

---

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 377a-b.

[61] Ibid., 377b.

Buddha made this comparison to show the idea of inherent good and inherent evil as the true teaching. He cites directly from the sutras to support his point:

> "The *Vīmalakīrti Sutra* says, 'Saṁsāra is nirvāṇa. Affliction is bodhi.' It also says, 'The sense-organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue are all pure land.' It also says, 'For the arrogant beings, [the Buddha] taught that abandoning sexual behavior, anger and ignorance is liberation, [whereas,] if there are no arrogant beings, [the Buddha taught that] sexual behavior, anger and ignorance are liberation.' It also says, 'The sixty-two false views are Buddha-seeds.' The *Sarva-dharmāpravṛtti-nirdeśa* (*Wu xing jing* 無行經) says, 'Desire is the Way. Anger and ignorance are the same. In these three things, all the teachings of the Buddha are included.' The *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* says, 'Tathāgatagarbha is the cause of the good and the non-good.'"[62]

These citations are related to the Mahāyāna idea that saṁsāra is nirvāṇa. They were originally used by Zhiyi as well to illuminate inherent good and inherent evil in nature and to support the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Accordingly, Chuandeng sees these scriptural citations as evidence that inherent evil is the Round Teaching the Buddha used to differentiate the Mahāyāna from the Hīnayāna. Chuandeng argues that "such meanings [of inherent evil in these citations] are widely found in the Vaipulya sutras. And, there are more examples than these." For Chuandeng, inherent evil was taught often during this period.

As for the Tripiṭaka, the Common, and the Separate teachings taught by the Buddha in this period, Chuandeng says:

> "From [the teachings in] all these [Vaipulya] sutras, it is the teachings that particularly expound nature-inclusion that form directly the Round Teaching. As for those teachings that do no reach this level, they are merely the Tripiṭaka, the Common and the Separate Teachings, instead of the Round."[63]

Among the sutras taught in this period, Chuandeng highly praises two sutras in particular: "The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* 圓覺經 illuminate to the

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

utmost the doctrine of nature including good and evil."[64] These two scriptures are regarded by Chuandeng to be the representative texts of the third period. The texts were not included in the original Five Periods because they appeared after Zhiyi. It is in the third period where Chuandeng legitimizes the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the supreme teaching in the Five Periods to support his later reinterpretations.

According to Zhiyi, during the fourth period the Buddha taught the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* that contain the Round as well as the Common and Separate Teachings. For Chuandeng, this is the period in which the Buddha focuses on the teaching of nature-inclusion.[65] Zhiyi considered that all the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* teach the Emptiness Truth of the Mahāyāna in order to eradicate the attachment sentient beings have to provisional phenomena. Chuandeng fears that people might take emptiness to be without inherent good and inherent evil. In fact, Chuandeng points out that the Emptiness as taught in the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* is the emptiness that manifests all phenomena. Chuandeng explains that, "True emptiness is used to eradicate the attachment to phenomenal manifestation rather than to negate phenomenal manifestation." The true emptiness contains all phenomena, indicating that the good and the evil of the ten realms are inherent in nature, which is exactly the true meaning of emptiness. Even though Chuandeng admits that there are Common and Separate teachings in the fourth period, he affirms that indeed this period's primary teaching is nature-inclusion, the Round Teaching.

Chuandeng regards the fifth period as the period in which the Buddha gives the

---

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

ultimate teaching of nature-inclusion in the *Lotus Sutra*:

> "In the first four periods, the Buddha puts forward the provisional for the sake of the true (*wei shi shi quan* 為實施權). That is, for the sake of the Way of *the one true teaching of nature-inclusion* (*xing ju yi shi* 性具一實), he puts forward *the three provisional teachings of the non-nature-inclusion*. [When teaching] the *Lotus Sutra* he 'opens the provisional to reveal the true' 開權顯實. That is, he *opens the three provisional teachings of non-nature-inclusion* (*bu ju zhi san quan* 不具之三權) of the first four periods in order *to reveal the true Round [nature-]inclusion teaching* of the *Lotus Sutra*. [He also] 'abandons the provisional to establish the true' (*fei quan li shi* 廢權立實). That is, he *abandons the three provisional teachings of non-nature-inclusion* of the first four periods in order *to establish the true Round* [*nature*-]*inclusion teaching* of the *Lotus Sutra*."[66]

Chuandeng employs the relationship of *the true* 實 and *the provisional* 權 to prove that nature-inclusion is the highest teaching in the *Lotus Sutra*. Shifting the focus of *the true* away from the Threefold Truth, Chuandeng reinterprets *the true* as "the one true teaching of nature-inclusion" 性具一實. That is, only the idea of inherent good and inherent evil is the true Round Teaching. Chuandeng reinterprets *the provisional* as "the three provisional teachings of non-nature-inclusion" 不具之三權. That is, the three provisional teachings, the Tripiṭaka, the Common, and the Separate, do not teach nature-inclusion.

Chuandeng reinterprets the two roles the *Lotus Sutra* plays in the fifth period as articulated by Zhiyi, as that of "opens the provisional to reveal the true" and "abandons the provisional to establish the true."[67] The role of "opening" is about how in the *Lotus Sutra* the Buddha shows what the teachings are themselves. According to Zhiyi, during the first four periods, the Buddha taught the three provisional teachings of the Tripiṭaka, the Common, and the Separate to gradually lead sentient beings to the true teaching of the

---

[66] Ibid.

[67] Zhiyi, *Mohe zhi guan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 34a.

Round, the Threefold Truth. In the fifth period, by opening the provisional, the Buddha is indicating that there is no duality between the provisional teaching and the true teaching; that is, the provisional teaching is the true teaching, the Threefold Truth. Focusing on inherent evil, Chuandeng reinterprets that, by opening the provisional teachings, the Buddha is indicating that **"the three provisional teachings of non-nature-inclusion" are "the one true teaching of nature-inclusion."** The role of "abandoning" stresses how in the *Lotus Sutra* the Buddha employs the teachings as methods. For Zhiyi, in the fifth period, the provisional methods of the previous four periods are discarded by the Buddha and only the true method/teaching is used by the Buddha to teach sentient beings. Chuandeng reinterprets that, by abandoning **"the three provisional teachings of non-nature-inclusion,"** the Buddha is establishing **"the one true teaching of nature-inclusion."** By this reinterpretation, Chuandeng maintains the supremacy of the *Lotus Sutra*, demonstrating that inherent evil has always been the supreme teaching of the Buddha in all the Five Periods as proved in the *Lotus Sutra* itself.

The *Lotus Sutra* provides Chuandeng with ample supporting evidence to justify his bold arguments proving inherent evil as the supreme teaching of the Buddha. In what follows, we see the thoroughly unique manner in which he uses the ten realms to interpret "opening the provisional of non-nature-inclusion" to reveal "the true of nature-inclusion" with insight.

Like for his predecessors, "All dharmas are Reality" is the source where Chuandeng finds that the ten realms are Reality. Since "all dharmas" are the ten realms, this can only mean that all the good and the evil of the ten realms are Reality and therefore are inherent in nature. For Chuandeng, if the teaching separates the nine realms from the Buddha

realm as Reality, it is “the provisional teaching of non-nature-inclusion.” The teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* regards all ten realms as Reality, and this is “the true teaching of nature-inclusion.” Accordingly, the *Lotus Sutra* opens “the provisional of non-nature-inclusion” to reveal “the true of nature-inclusion.”

Chuandeng goes one step further and reinterprets the role of the sutra. Instead of the sutra “opens the provisional of non-nature-inclusion to reveal the true of nature-inclusion,” it actually **“opens the provisional nine realms of non-nature-inclusion to reveal the true Buddha realm of nature-inclusion.”** If the nine realms are separated from the Buddha realm of Reality, then it means that the nine realms are the provisional and that only the Buddha realm is true. For Chuandeng, however, the *Lotus Sutra* no longer regards the nine realms as the provisional but as the Reality of the Buddha realm; that is, there is no duality between the nine realms and the Buddha realm. Chuandeng, therefore, argues that the *Lotus Sutra* opens “the provisional nine realms of non-nature-inclusion” to reveal “the true Buddha realm of nature-inclusion.”[68]

Chuandeng goes on to reinterpret the nine realms, citing from the sutra for support. To interpret “opening the provisional of the human and the god realms,” he cites that the small actions of lowering the head, putting palms together, a snap of the fingers, or scattering flowers [toward the Buddha] will all make a person attain the Buddha-Way.[69] Since the Buddha claims that all the good deeds of the human and god realms can make a person become a Buddha, Chuandeng sees this as the Buddha showing that the true of the

[68] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 377c.

[69] Ibid.

Buddha realm exists in the provisional of the human and the god realms. In other words, the provisional of the human and the god realms is the true of the Buddha realm, and the Buddha realm includes the human and the god realms. Therefore, for Chuandeng, in the sutra, the Buddha "opens the provisional of the human and the god realms" to reveal "the true of the Buddha realm."

When interpreting the "opening the provisional of the śrāvaka realm," he cites the story of the Buddha foretelling that his śrāvaka disciples will all eventually become Buddhas. Chuandeng takes this to mean that the provisional śrāvaka realm is the true of the Buddha realm and the Buddha realm includes the śrāvaka realm. Therefore, in the sutra, the Buddha "opens the provisional of the śrāvaka realms" to reveal "the true of the Buddha realm."[70]

Chuandeng cites the stories of Devadatta (*ti po da duo* 提婆達多) and Nāgakanyā (*long nv* 龍女), two representative figures in the sutra, to demonstrate that the sutra opens "the provisional of the nine realms" to reveal "the true of the Buddha realm."[71] Devadatta committed three unpardonable sins[72] and was doomed to the Avīci hell; still the Buddha predicted that Devadatta would become a Buddha.[73] For Chuandeng, this means that the provisional of the hell realm is the true of the Buddha realm, and the Buddha realm includes the hell realm. Nāgakanyā developed her bodhi-mind and practiced the bodhisattva way, so she became a Buddha right away.[74] For Chuandeng,

---

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra* 大般涅槃經, T12: 479b.

[73] *Lotus Sutra*, T9: p.35a.

[74] *Lotus Sutra*, T9: 35c.

this means that the provisional of the bodhisattva realm is the true of the Buddha realm, and the Buddha realm includes the bodhisattva realm. Accordingly, the provisional of the nine realms, starting from the most evil realm of hell up to the good realm of the bodhisattvas, is the true of the Buddha realm, and the Buddha realm includes the nine realms. Chuandeng thus argues that this proves that the *Lotus Sutra opens the provisional of the cultivated good and the cultivated evil to reveal the true of the inherent good and the inherent evil*. Thus, Chuandeng has redefined the *Lotus Sutra*'s role of "opening the provisional to reveal the true" to that of "opening the provisional of the nine realms to reveal the true of the Buddha realm."

"As for the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*," Chuandeng argues, "it is particularly about inherent evil because the sutra says that an icchantika and a good person have Buddha-nature, and this is called [Buddha-nature as] good or evil Conditioning Cause." This is evidence for Chuandeng's claim that Buddha-nature contains good and evil. In fact, Chuandeng sees in the sutra so many instances like these that prove inherent evil and he says, "I cannot cite them all." Thus, inherent evil is the hallmark of the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*.[75]

Chuandeng finalizes his reinterpretation of the Five Periods by pointing out that revealing inherent evil is the reason why the Buddha came to the world to teach. Had not Tiantai illuminated inherent evil, then this supreme teaching would have been lost. He says:

> "If those who want to know the single great matter for which the Buddha came to this world and do not understand the significance of nature includes the good and the evil, it is just like roaming in the night without eyes. How can they 'directly point to the mind?' How can they 'see into one's nature and attain Buddhahood?' If the doctrine and contemplation of the Tiantai school does not illuminate this idea, then

---

[75] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 377c. See also his *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註, X57: 356c.

the immediate Round Teaching would vanish."[76]

Chuandeng's primary purpose for reinterpreting doctrinal classification is to project the superiority of the Tiantai teaching and to establish the framework and justification for the development of the rest of his theories on inherent evil. Even though he demonstrates the idea to be ubiquitous within the Mahāyāna sutras, Chuandeng asserts that it is the Tiantai school that throws inherent evil into relief. Inherent good and inherent evil is the supreme teaching of the Buddha, so for Chuandeng, it behooves the practitioner to know it and to learn it, and when promulgating, to teach it and to teach it widely.[77]

Although Chuandeng affirms that Tiantai is the only steward of the idea of inherent evil, he evinces a conciliatory attitude when attempting to harmonize with Chan. Let us remember that early on Chuandeng was influenced by Chan as both his teachers were Chan masters, even though Baisong eventually turned to Tiantai. At the start of his treatise and in the quote above he uses two distinctly Chan phrases, "directly pointing to the mind" and "seeing into one's nature to attain Buddhahood." He uses these two phrases as an opening for approaching Chan to let them know that they too have inherent evil in their teaching. As Chuandeng says in his introductory remarks, "Inherent evil interpenetrates with everything and there is no dharma it cannot reach. Thus it naturally includes the inherent good of the Buddha realm. This is the profound gate of 'pointing to the mind and seeing one's nature to attain Buddhahood.'"[78]

Chuandeng is unlike his predecessors in that, instead of criticizing, he is trying to convince his contemporaries that their highest teaching is inherent evil. In the Ming,

---

[76] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 377c.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.,375b.

Chan was the most influential Buddhist school of the day and "the unity of Chan and scriptural teaching" was the important topic of discussion in Buddhism. At the outset of his treatise, and in other works, Chuandeng seeks to settle the long-term discord that had existed between Tiantai and Chan since the Song period. Whereas Zhili and Huaize depreciated Chan as the Separate Teaching to maintain that Tiantai is the Round Teaching, Chuandeng simply weakens the difference between both schools. We can see this in his commentary on Huaize's work, the *Commentary on the Record of Tiantai's Transmission of the Buddha's Mind-Seal* (*Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註): "All cultivated evil is identical to inherent evil. When reaching the point of the universal interpenetration of inherent evil, it is nothing more than 'seeing into one's nature and attaining Buddhahood.'"[79] Clearly, he is harmonizing both schools with the idea that Buddha-nature includes the good and the evil. In this work, Chuandeng disagrees with Huaize's criticism that Chan does not have scriptural authority, "How can it be only the Tiantai? Bodhidharma (The first patriarch of Chan) said: 'we have the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* to seal (approve) the mind.' This is also the correct transmission of the supreme teaching. This is the reason why during the time of the fifth and sixth patriarchs the Chan school valued the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*."[80] For Chuandeng, Tiantai is not the only school that can receive the correct transmission of the Buddha's supreme teaching. Regarding this point, Zhuhong, one of the four great masters in the late Ming, shared Chuandeng's view. Zhuhong said, "It is fine that *the Record of Tiantai's Transmission of the Buddha's Mind-Seal* claims that Tiantai transmits [the Mind-Seal], but it is improper to say that [the

---

[79] Chuandeng, *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註, X57: 371c.

[80] Ibid., 366c.

Mind-Seal] is only transmitted by the Tiantai. … The doctrine of the nature-inclusion can be seen in different sutras. It was illuminated by different patriarchs and we do not know how many they are."[81] Like Zhuhong, Chuandeng thinks that the Chan also has the doctrine of nature-inclusion thought. According to Chuandeng's disciple, Jiang Mingyu 蔣鳴玉, Chuandeng's commentary is to explain the idea of nature-inclusion in order to reconcile both schools, while Huaize's the *Record of Tiantai's Transmission* is written to exclude the Chan.[82] Nevertheless, Chuandeng's purpose for reconciling the two schools is to show that the idea of nature-inclusion is the correct transmission of the Buddha.

In this chapter, we have seen how Chuandeng systematically analyzed the Five Periods to illuminate that all the Mahāyāna sutras reveal that inherent evil is the supreme teaching the Buddha taught throughout his life. This was an exhaustive enterprise that set the framework and provided the justification for the development of his theory on inherent evil and his theory on the practice methods of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. None of his predecessors took such a thorough approach in establishing the relevancy of inherent evil in Buddhism. While Huaize only interpreted a few sutras to support his claim that inherent evil is universally taught in the Mahāyāna sutras, Chuandeng proved the universality of the idea in all the Mahāyāna sutras via the Five Periods. Chuandeng's reinterpretation confirmed Huaize's view that inherent evil is taught in the *Lotus Sutra* and is the Mind-Seal transmission of the Buddha. Zhanran, Zhili, and Huaize made significant contributions to the development of inherent evil in their goal to revive Tiantai, but Chuandeng was the first thinker to change the contents of the Five Periods, an

---

[81] Zhuhong, *Zhu chuang san bi* 竹窗三筆, in *Lianchi da shi quan ji* 蓮池大師全集, vol.4, 3999.

[82] Jiang Mingyu 蔣鳴玉, "Youmen da shi ta ming" 有門大師塔銘, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 449.

important feature of Tiantai, in order to achieve the same goal.

We also have seen Chuandeng's use of inherent good and inherent evil to fuse the Chinese traditional thought into Tiantai's doctrinal classification system. With the syncretic trend underway in the Ming, a great number of literati were turning to Buddhism and the reconciliation of Buddhism and Confucianism was particularly important. Chuandeng did not compromise the integrity of inherent evil in his efforts to harmonize Buddhism and Confucianism. Rather, he found what both teachings have in common and he deliberately demonstrated the inferiority of Confucianism categorizing it as the worldly teaching as opposed to the superiority of Buddhism, the supra-mundane teaching. Like his predecessors, Chuandeng incorporated and criticized influential intellectual thought of the day to strengthen and revive the Tiantai doctrine as the superior teaching. A relevant point to remember is that Chuandeng legitimatized the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the supreme teaching in the Five Periods to support his later reinterpretations.

Chapter 7 Chuandeng's Theory on the Principle of Nature-inclusion

At the start, Chuandeng uses essence and function to refer to nature and practice, his intention being to explain nature and practice with the idea of "unchanging Suchness that follows conditions." He uses "unchanging Suchness" to explain inherent good and inherent evil as essence and uses "following conditions" to explain cultivated good and cultivated evil as function. Using the relationship of essence and function to describe Reality is a feature of nature-origination thought represented by Huayan. Originally, Tiantai did not use this theoretical framework. Zhanran, however, absorbed this view into the Tianati teaching and it remained a part of nature-inclusion thought. In order to differentiate the Suchness as "pure mind," as understood by Huayan's nature-origination thought, from the Suchness that includes good and evil, as understood by Tiantai's nature-inclusion, Zhili then redefined Zhanran's idea of Suchness. Chuandeng in turn follows Zhili and combines nature-inclusion thought with the idea of "Suchness following conditions." While Zhili used nature-inclusion thought to explain "the Suchness that follows conditions," Chuandeng uses "the Suchness that follows conditions" to explain nature-inclusion thought. In addition, Chuandeng adopt the teaching of pure mind as Suchness found in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to expound nature-inclusion thought. For Chuandeng, there is no conflict between the pure mind and the idea that Buddha-nature includes both good and evil. Rather, the nature which includes both good and evil is no other than the pure mind.

Following his doctrinal classification reinterpretation, Chuandeng continues to

present his nature-inclusion theory in eight parts. He calls each part a gate.[1] The first four gates are his reinterpretations on the principle of Buddha-nature including good and evil. The other four gates are about the practice of the Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil. This chapter discusses the first four gates. In the first and second gates, Chuandeng respectively explains the aspect of Suchness as essence and the aspect of following conditions as its function. In the third and fourth gates, he shows that essence and its function are identical to each other.

The First Gate: In Unchanging Suchness the Ten Realms are Hidden (*zhen ru bu bian shi jie ming fu* 真如不變, 十界冥伏)

In the first gate, Chuandeng explains what Suchness is before it follows conditions generated by thoughts. Chuandeng points out that "immutability" is the feature of Suchness, suggesting that the Buddha-nature possesses each particular nature of the ten realms. Because these particular natures have not yet manifested the ten realms, they are concealed in Suchness.

At first, Chuandeng argues that even though Suchness has different names in different sutras, these names all indicate the immutability of Buddha-nature (mind-nature) before it follows conditions. By enumerating several important sutras in Chinese Buddhism, he proves that the state of Suchness itself is eternally unchanging:

> "This gate is about the state of all Buddhas and sentient beings when they do not have the consciousness-mind in the beginningless kalpas (eons). The profound mind as Suchness does not move or change. It is pure and vast as well as eternal and firm. The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* calls it 'the pure Dharma-body as the Dharma-realm of the one reality.' The *Lotus Sutra* calls it 'all dharmas are Reality.' The *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* calls it 'possessing the gate of great dhāraṇī (mantra).' The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* calls it 'the original pure essence of bodhi and nirvāṇa,' also 'the

[1] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 377c-78a.

> tathāgatagarbha in its emptiness,' 'amala (stainless) consciousness,' 'Buddha-nature as Suchness' and 'the great perfect mirror wisdom.' The *Awakening of Faith* calls it 'the original enlightenment.'"[2]

Chuandeng delivers an important message here when he declares the "immutability" to be the characteristic of mind-nature. Mind-nature is immutable because it is pure, vast, eternal, and firm. The quality of purity denotes that nature is not tainted and transcends the value judgments of good and evil. The quality of vastness denotes that Suchness itself is everywhere—that it is throughout everything and that it includes the ten realms. The qualities of eternity and firmness indicate that the purity and vastness of mind-nature originally exist and can never vanish or change. Therefore, for Chuandeng, purity and vastness are two important aspects of the immutability of mind-nature. In other words, unchanging mind-nature is pure (without defilement) and vast (it is everywhere and throughout everything and it includes the ten realms). Purity does not conflict with the inclusiveness of the ten realms in mind-nature and these two aspects of mind-nature never change.

Chuandeng continues to explain the feature of "immutability" by citing from the scriptures. First, he cites "original enlightenment" (*ben jue* 本覺) from *Awakening of Faith* to further illuminate the pure and vast aspects of mind-nature. According to the *Awakening of Faith*, original enlightenment means:

> "The mind as essence is free from thoughts. When it is free from thoughts and phenomenal forms, its existence is equal to the realm of empty space. It is everywhere and eternally abiding in oneness. It is the eternal Dharma-body of the Tathāgata (lit. Thus-come One, i.e., the Buddha)."[3]

For Chuandeng, the original enlightened mind free from deluded thoughts and

---

[2] Ibid., 378a.

[3] Ibid.

phenomenal forms is the pure aspect of mind-nature. But this does not mean that the mind does not have anything in it. Since the enlightened mind is everywhere, Chuandeng sees that it is vast and that it includes the ten realms and thus claims that "this original enlightenment includes the ten realms" and that "it does not lack any thing" of the ten realms within it.[4] Therefore, for Chuandeng, the "original enlightenment" demonstrates that the purity and the ten realms inherent in nature are features of unchanging Suchness. While *Awakening* claims the pure mind to be Suchness, Chuandeng reinforces his notion that the pure mind includes the ten realms. This is the key to understanding how Chuandeng harmonizes the pure mind of nature-origination thought with the inherent evil of nature-inclusion thought.

In addition, he asserts that the Three Causes of Buddha-nature mentioned in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* also show the coexistence of purity and the ten realms in unchanging Suchness. As discussed in chapter three, Buddha-nature as Direct Cause 正因佛性 is the Suchness with which all sentient beings are endowed. Buddha-nature as Revealing Cause 了因佛性 is the wisdom that realizes Suchness. Buddha-nature as Conditioning Cause 緣因佛性 refers to all the merits and practices which support the wisdom in realizing Suchness. In terms of Buddhahood, according to Zhiyi, the Three Causes of Buddha-nature are equal to the Three Virtues of the Buddhas. Chuandeng reinforces this by saying that Buddha-nature as Direct Cause is the virtue of the Dharma-body and the Dharma-body is everywhere. Buddha-nature as Revealing Cause is the virtue of prajñā (wisdom) which illuminates itself, i.e., the original enlightenment. Buddha-nature as Conditioning Cause is the virtue of liberation, and the state of liberation is pure and

4 Ibid., 378a.

untainted.[5] Thus, for Chuandeng, the Three Virtues demonstrate that the originally illuminating enlightenment as Buddha-nature is pure and everywhere. This then means that the ten realms are inherent in Buddha-nature and they are pure.

For Chuandeng, therefore, the state of unchanging Suchness when it is not following conditions is pure and it includes the ten realms. He says:

> "This original enlightenment includes the direct rewards (*zheng bao* 正報, sentient beings) and the circumstantial rewards (*yi bao* 依報, the circumstances into which the sentient beings are born) of the ten realms. Since it has not followed conditions yet, [the ten realms] are hidden in the one-nature and they have not manifested."[6]

According to Chuandeng, when not following conditions, Suchness itself does not manifest the ten realms, but the respective natures of all things (all the direct rewards and circumstantial rewards) of the ten realms still exist within Suchness. Since they all exist in the one Suchness, each thing of the ten realms is the same as Suchness and as pure as Suchness. All the pure natures of all things of the ten realms are *included* in Suchness, and this is exactly the state of unchanging Suchness; as he says in the title of the first gate, "the ten realms are hidden" in nature.

In the same quotation, Chuandeng introduces two terms that are significant to his theory: "direct reward" and "circumstantial reward." They are significant because they help him prove that the ten realms are hidden in Suchness by his connecting these terms to the concept of the seven elements as discussed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. The concept of the seven elements will be discussed more thoroughly in the third gate. For now, it is important to point out that Chuandeng equates the seven elements that compose the universe with the concept of the ten realms.

---

[5] Ibid., 378a.

[6] Ibid., 378a. "但此本覺。雖具十界依正。以未隨緣故。冥伏於一性之中。未曾彰顯。"

The seven elements are earth (*di* 地), water (shui 水), fire (*huo* 火), wind (*feng* 風), empty space (*kong* 空), seeing (*jian* 見), and consciousness (*shi* 識). Chuandeng expands that the seven elements represent the ten realms, dividing the seven elements into two groups: the circumstantial reward and the direct reward. The first five elements, as the material field, form all the different circumstantial rewards of the ten realms; in other words, the circumstances into which sentient beings are born. The two elements of seeing and consciousness, as the mental field, shape all the different direct rewards of the ten realms; in other words, sentient beings themselves. For Chuandeng, these seven elements shape all the different direct rewards and circumstantial rewards of the ten realms and thus represent all things of the ten realms.

Chuandeng thus uses the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as evidence to show that original enlightenment includes the direct reward and circumstantial reward:

> "Speaking of the circumstantial rewards of the ten realms inherent in [original enlightenment], it is what the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* says: 'The nature of form (earth) is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true form.' Water, fire, wind and empty space are all the same as this. They all are 'originally pure and everywhere in the Dharma-realm.' Speaking of the direct rewards of the ten realms inherent in [original enlightenment], it is what the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* says: 'The nature of seeing is the illuminating enlightenment and the essence of enlightenment is the illuminating seeing.' 'The nature of consciousness is the illuminating understanding and the illuminating enlightenment is the true consciousness.' They all are 'originally pure and everywhere in the Dharma-realm.'"[7]

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* says that the nature of everything is the pure mind of tathāgatagarbha (Suchness). To support this point, the sutra discusses the respective natures of each of the seven elements and concludes that each nature is the pure mind of tathāgatagarbha and the seven elements are all originally pure and everywhere.[8]

---

[7] Ibid.

[8] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 117c-19a.

Chuandeng reinterprets this and presents his unique idea by saying that Suchness *includes* the seven elements and thus demonstrates that all the “direct rewards” and “circumstantial rewards” of the ten realms are included in nature. Because each nature of the seven elements is pure and exists in Suchness, he argues that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* proves that all the natures of the direct rewards and circumstantial rewards of the ten realms are hidden and included in nature. The pure mind, when not following conditions, does not hinder itself from including the good and the evil of the ten realms, and the ten realms inherent in nature do not hinder the purity of nature. Therefore, the pure mind is identical to the ten realms hidden in nature, and vice versa. If Suchness does not include the ten realms then it can no longer be called Suchness. Thus, for Chuandeng, the seven elements inherent in nature indicate the ten realms hidden in nature and this is Suchness *before* it follows conditions.

The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment also provides Chuandeng with an opportunity to prove that Buddha-nature is pure and the ten realms are included in it:

> “Because enlightenment is perfect illumination, it reveals that the mind is pure. The mind is pure, so the object of seeing is pure. The seeing is pure, so the eye-organ is pure. The organ is pure, so the eye-consciousness is pure. The consciousness is pure, so the object of hearing is pure. The hearing is pure, so the ear-organ is pure. The organ is pure, so the ear-consciousness is pure. The consciousness is pure, so the object of perceiving is pure. In this way, the nose, tongue, body and mind are the same. … Gentlemen! The enlightened nature is everywhere, pure, motionless, perfect and boundless, so we know that the six sense-organs are everywhere. The organs are everywhere, so we know the six objects are everywhere. …”[9]

According to the sutra, since the enlightened mind is pure and pervades everywhere then the six sense-organs, the six objects, and the six consciousnesses are pure and pervade everywhere as well. For Chuandeng, this could only mean that these eighteen fields (the

---

[9] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 378a-b.

six sense-organs, the six objects, and the six consciousnesses)[10] represent the ten realms. The eighteen fields is one way in which Buddhism explains the universe: the six objects represent the six material fields and the sense-organs and consciousnesses represent the twelve mental fields. Their interaction can be explained in that sentient beings' six consciousnesses arise when their six sense-organs meet their objects. Since the eighteen fields are pure and pervade everywhere, Chuandeng concludes that, "[Buddha-]nature includes the ten realms, none of them are not pure and they do not move and are everywhere."[11]

In the final part of the first gate, Chuandeng reiterates the idea that the ten realms hidden in nature mean inherent good and inherent evil:

> "The Three Causes [of Buddha-nature] of the nine realms are included in nature, which means the inherent evil. The Three Causes [of Buddha-nature] of the Buddha-realm is included in nature, which means the inherent good."[12]

The Three Causes of Buddha-nature and the pure ten realms hidden in nature are Suchness and both are identical to and included in each other. Since the nine realms are the evil, then the Three Causes of Buddha-nature of the nine realms are the inherent evil. Likewise, the Buddha realm is the good and, therefore, the Three Causes of Buddha-nature of the Buddha-realm are the inherent good. Inherent good and inherent evil describe the state of Suchness when not following conditions. Thus, Chuandeng affirms Zhiyi's idea that the Three Causes of Buddha-nature possess both good and evil.

Chuandeng wants to remind people about the mutually inclusive characteristic of

---

[10] The six sense-organs are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The six objects of the six sense-organs are form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and idea. The six consciousnesses are the consciousnesses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

[11] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 378b.

[12] Ibid., 378b-c. "本具九界三因。名為性惡。本具佛界三因。名為性善。"

inherent good and inherent evil, "The good and the evil of the Three Causes of the ten realms stay in the same nature. They are identical to each other yet they are differentiated. They can be manifesting differently, but they are always united."[13] Because inherent good and inherent evil exist within the same nature, they are identical to each other. Although they are identical to each other, they have their own functions to manifest good or evil. They have their own functions, but they are united in the same nature. Chuandeng uses metaphors from various sutras to illuminate this idea. From the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra,* he cites, "a tiny particle of dust completely contains [all the great variety of] scriptures of the grand macrocosm." From the *Mahāsaṃghata Sūtra* (*da ji jing* 大集經), he cites, "If one enters the ocean to take a bath, one already uses the waters of all the rivers."[14] Chuandeng is here likening all the scriptures and the waters of all the rivers, respectively united in a particle of dust and in the ocean, to the inherent good and the inherent evil united in nature. He demonstrates that Suchness itself, when not following conditions, is the inherent good and the inherent evil of the ten realms and both inherent good and inherent evil are identical to and included in each other.

Chuandeng's concept of the ten realms "hidden" in nature comes from Zhiyi who said, "All [the ten realms] are *hidden* in the mind. Although they do not manifest, they are completely included in [the mind] as they are."[15] This is why Andō Toshio says that compared to his predecessors, Chuandeng's thought is the closest to Zhiyi's original thought.[16] In terms of the idea of unchanging Suchness that follows conditions adopted

---

13 Ibid., 378c

14 Ibid. "一微塵中具足大千經卷" "如人入海浴已用諸河之水"

15 Zhiyi, *Guanyin xuan yi* 觀音玄義, T34: 888c.

16 Andō, *Tendai gaku* 天台學, 137.

by Zhanran, both Chuandeng and Zhili interpret its "immutability" as the ten realms inherent in Buddha-nature. While Zhili emphasized inherent evil as defilement, Chuandeng regards it as pure. Zhili's explanation served to differentiate the Tiantai idea of inherent evil from the Huayan idea of nature-origination thought, which does not regard the nine realms to be included in the pure-mind because the nine realms are defiled. Chuandeng, however, interprets the pure mind to include the ten realms but the ten realms are purity rather than defilement. Thus, Chuandeng creatively harmonizes nature-origination thought and nature-inclusion thought without violating their respective positions.

The Second Gate: When Suchness Follows Conditions, the Ten Realms Become Differentiated (*Zhen ru sui yuan shi jie cha bie* 真如隨緣，十界差別)

The second gate is about what happens when Suchness *follows* conditions. For Chuandeng, the ten realms are hidden in Suchness and they have the potential to manifest as phenomena. In other words, when the inherent good and the inherent evil follow conditions, they manifest as the cultivated good and the cultivated evil of the phenomena of the ten realms.

Chuandeng stresses that "capability" (*neng* 能) is the key word to keep in mind when understanding and speaking about "following conditions." To differentiate the Separate from the Round Teaching, Chuandeng, just like Zhili and Huaize, links the Confucian analogy of "an educated man is not a utensil" (*jun zi bu qi* 君子不器) to the Round Teaching and links the metaphor of "a purely good man" to the Separate

Teaching.[17]

Chuandeng notes that the Buddha-nature as described by the Separate Teaching is like the purely good person whose nature is incapable of doing evil. Because, “for the purely good persons, all the evil things are not what they are originally capable of doing. When they are forced by evil people to do evil things, they worry about losing their honor and virtue and they want to hide in shame [because they think] these [evil things] are wrong deeds.” In the Separate Teaching, the evil of the nine realms only manifests by the force of ignorance because Buddha-nature only has the capability of manifesting the good of the Buddha realm. Thus, to manifest the evil things of the nine realms is to go against Buddha-nature.

In the Round Teaching, however, Buddha-nature is like the Confucian analogy that says that an educated person, unlike a utensil, is not limited to a single function. In fact, Buddha-nature has the capabilities to manifest the cultivated good and the cultivated evil. The capability of manifesting evil things is one of Buddha-nature’s inherent functions. Thus, when evil is manifesting, it is not going against Buddha-nature. As Chuandeng says:

> “[Suchness] is capable of following the defiled conditions and it can generate the nine realms. It is also capable of following the pure conditions and it can generate the Buddha realm. Since the ten realms are inherent in nature and [their manifestations] are the capabilities nature possesses, what is wrong when it just manifests its own capability?”[18]

Following conditions and manifesting the ten different realms is the capability of Suchness presenting itself as the inherent ten realms. In fact, within the framework of

---

[17] Zhili, *Guan wuliang shou fo jingshu miao zong chao* 觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔, T37: 203c-204a. See also Huaize, *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記, T46: 936a-b.

[18] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 380a.

essence and function, "capability" is to function what Suchness is to essence. Thus, Chuandeng asserts that this is why the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* claims—"Suchness can follow pure or defiled conditions, so it generates the ten realms."[19]

Chuandeng further explains, by cause and effect, how Suchness follows conditions. He points out that the effect of the phenomenal manifestations of the ten realms is subject to the cause of thoughts and karmas.[20] The pure and defiled thoughts and karmas of sentient beings are the conditions that Suchness follows. But, what Chuandeng stresses more fully is the significance of the "one thought"; because a pure or defiled karma is developed from a pure or defiled thought. To explain "one thought" as the primary cause, Chuandeng invokes his teacher Baisong's idea that "while one realm manifests, the other nine realms are hidden" (*yi jie xian qi jiu jie ming fu* 一界現起九界冥伏).[21] When one thought arises it forcibly falls into one of the ten realms and when that realm arises it becomes phenomenal activity (*shi zao* 事造). Meanwhile, the other nine realms are hidden in nature, i.e., included in the principle (*li ju* 理具). Similarly, the arising of karma works in the same way. Thus, the different combinations of what is manifested and what is hidden of the ten realms present the distinctions of the ten realms. In other words, the manifestation of the Buddha realm does not indicate the nonexistence of the other nine that are hidden in nature. The evil of the nine realms never disappears and is always latent. Likewise, when one of the nine realms is manifesting, the good of the Buddha

---

[19] Ibid., 380a. Attributed to the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, this citation "能隨染淨緣，遂分十法界" is actually from Bensong's *Zhu huayan jing ti fa jie guan men song* 註華嚴經題法界觀門頌, T45: 701b. Chuandeng may quote it from Huaize's *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記, T46: 934b.

[20] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 380a.

[21] Ibid., 380a. See also Zhenjue, *San qian you men song lue jie* 三千有門頌略解, X57: 55b.

realm never disappears and is hidden in nature as the potential for every sentient being to become a Buddha. This is Chuandeng's theory that explains how Suchness follows conditions to manifest the ten realms.

To make his theory more accessible to readers, Chuandeng creatively develops twelve diagrams to clearly demonstrate "while one realm manifests, the other nine realms are hidden." He develops these diagrams by borrowing from Zunshi's 遵式 "Ten-realm diagram" (*shi fa jie tu* 十法界圖). Tiantai thinker Zunshi drew this diagram (see diagram 1) to demonstrate the idea that one-mind includes all the ten realms and can manifest each of them.[22] The diagram presents ten small circles within a larger circle. Each small circle represents a realm of the ten realms and has a representative image within it, e.g., images of Buddha, bodhisattva, and so forth. In the center of the larger circle there is a small black circle with the character for "mind" (*xin* 心) inside. The small black circle indicates that the ten realms are generated by the mind. The black color of the small circle symbolizes the mutual inclusiveness of the ten realms within the one mind.[23]

In order to express the "function of Suchness is to follow conditions," Chuandeng renames the diagram to "When Suchness follows conditions the ten realms become differentiated." (*zhen ru sui yuan shi jie cha bie* 真如隨緣十界差別, also see diagram 1).[24] Chuandeng thereby demonstrates that Suchness can manifest the Buddha realm or one of the nine realms when it follows pure or defiled thoughts respectively. Chuandeng creatively modifies Zunshi's diagram to draw eleven more diagrams showing in detail

---

22 Zunshi, *Tianzhu bie ji* 天竺別集, X57: 27d.

23 Ibid., 28c.

24 Chuadeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 380b.

how Suchness manifests in the different realms. In diagram 2, Chuandeng leaves the ten circles blank to demonstrate the state of the ten realms hidden in nature when Suchness is *not* following conditions, naming it "In unchanging Suchness the ten realms are hidden."[25] Diagrams 3 through 12 accordingly demonstrate the manifestations of each realm,[26] reinforcing his message that "while one realm manifests, the other nine realms are hidden." Take diagram 8 as an example. He keeps the image of the human realm and removes the other nine images demonstrating that while the human realm manifests, the other nine realms are hidden. Likewise, the other nine diagrams represent the manifestations of the other nine realms respectively. Chuandeng explained that he created these drawings to help the readers understand more clearly the meaning of nature-inclusion thought as well as to instruct the readers to contemplate correctly their own minds in accordance with the drawings.[27]

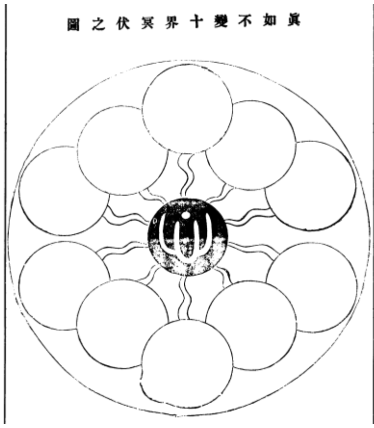
Under each diagram, Chuandeng explains the cause and effect of each realm. Following Zunshi, he points out that when Suchness is following one thought of purity or one thought of defilement—a pure or a defiled cause—the effect will be the different manifestations of the ten realms. When one thought that belongs to the Buddha realm arises, the effect is the manifestation of the cultivated good of the Buddha realm. When one thought that belongs to the hell realm arises, the effect is the manifestation of the cultivated evil of the hell realm. The other realms work in a similar fashion.

---

[25] Ibid., 379a.

[26] Ibid., 382-90b.

[27] Ibid., 380b.



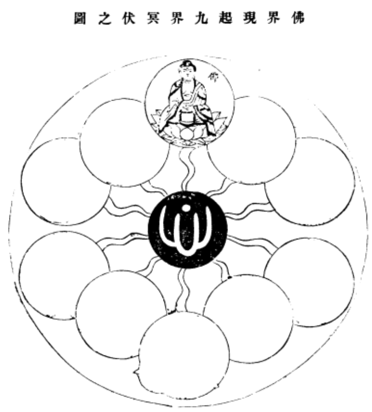


diagram 1:

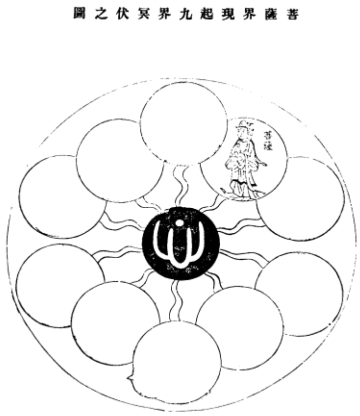
-Zunshi's "Ten-realm diagram"
-Chuandeng's diagram of "When Suchness follows conditions the ten realms"

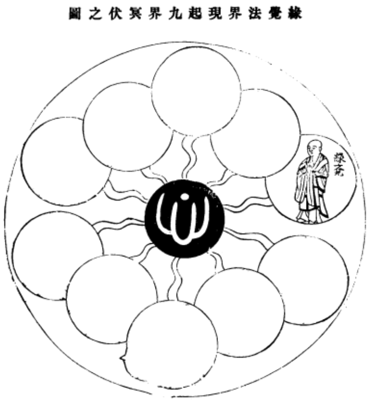
diagram 2:

In unchanging Suchness the ten realms are hidden

diagram 3:

The Buddha realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden





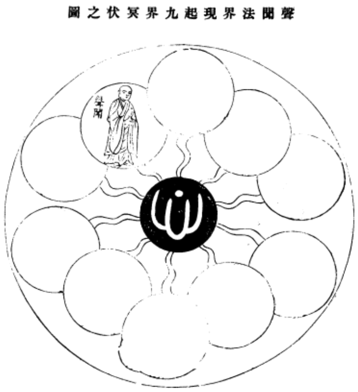


diagram 4:

The bodhisattva realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

diagram 5:

The pratyekabuddhas realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

diagram 6:

The śrāvaka realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

diagram 7:

The god realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

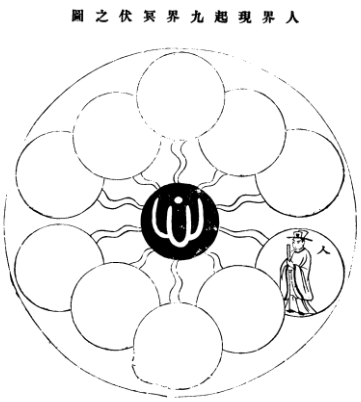


diagram 8:

The human realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

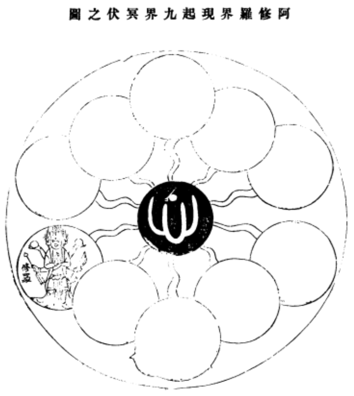


diagram 9:

The asura realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

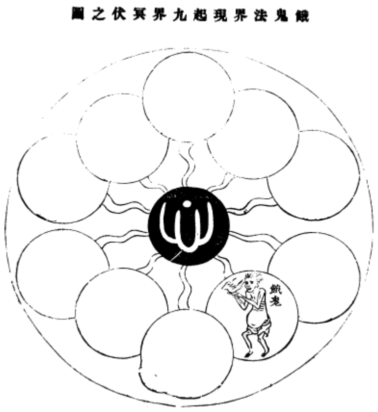


diagram 10:

The hungry ghost realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

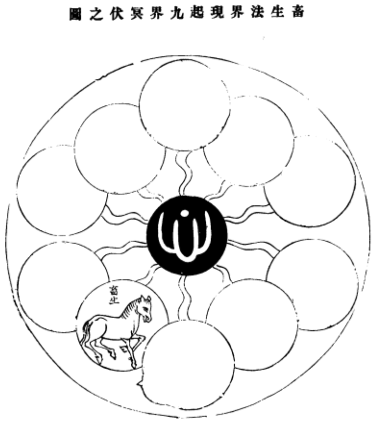


diagram 11:

The animal realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

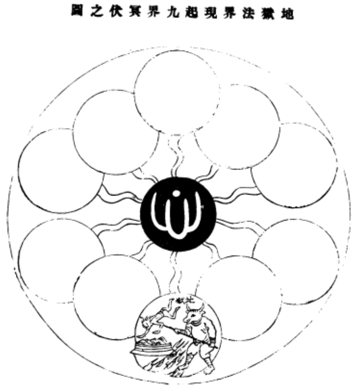


diagram 12:

The hell realm manifests while the other nine realms are hidden

Chuandeng emphasizes that the key to change the effect of a realm in which a sentient being finds itself is to transform the "one thought." He holds that the effect is never separate from any one thought of a sentient being's daily life. Therefore, one thought can decide a future effect. If one thought changes, the effect changes as well. If one thought does not change, the effect will not change at all. Chuandeng argues that, with the exception of the Buddhas, all sentient beings of the nine realms have the opportunity to advance or regress to other realms. For example, if an ordinary person of the human realm develops the thought of resolving to attain Buddhahood and never wavers in his resolve, he will eventually achieve the Buddha realm. If the ordinary person does not have firm thoughts and follows the defiled conditions, he will regress to one of the lower realms.[28] Likewise, if a sentient being of the hell realm develops one firm thought for advancing, that being will go to the human realm or to one of the four sage realms. Even in the same realm, a different thought will lead to a different effect. For example, if a person of the human realm who has the reward of wealth commits wrongdoings, that person will have the retribution of poverty. Chuandeng points out that all the effects of the ten realms are the result of one thought. If one thought changes, then "in one instant hell can become heaven."[29] In sum, the pure and the defiled thoughts of the mind are the causes for the different manifestations of the ten realms. Following the defiled thoughts of the nine realms or the pure thoughts of the Buddha realm, Suchness manifests the cultivated evil of the nine realms or the cultivated good of the Buddha realm. Herein is Chuandeng's theory on why the ten realms become differentiated when

---

[28] Ibid., 381b.

[29] Ibid., 391a.

Suchness follows conditions.

Chuandeng's creative exposition demonstrates the dynamics of "when Suchness follows conditions the ten realms become differentiated." In the first gate, Chuandeng points out that unchanging Suchness as essence is the ten realms hidden in Suchness and they are no different from Suchness; they are the inherent good and the inherent evil. In the second gate, Chuandeng uses the term "capability" to point out that the functions of following conditions and the manifestation of the differentiated ten realms are the inherent capabilities of Suchness, and the manifestation of the differentiated ten realms are the cultivated good and the cultivated evil.

His explanations illuminate an important feature in Tiantai's understanding about the non-duality of essence and function which he more strongly demonstrates throughout the rest of his treatise. According to Tiantai thought, essence and function are not separate from each other and one does not exist prior to the other. In fact, essence and function coexist at the same time and are no different from each other. Chuandeng's explanation on "while one realm manifests, the other nine realms are hidden" demonstrates the non-duality of essence and function in that unchanging Suchness and the manifestation of a realm are no different because a manifested realm contains the whole of the ten realms. They are apparently different only because in function one realm is appearing and the others are hidden. A chameleon has the ability to change colors according to its environment because it has those colors in it naturally. Even though its appearance turns one color or another, the chameleon remains a chameleon and it still has all the other colors in its nature. So too, when Suchness follows a thought and turns into a realm, it remains Suchness and the realm that Suchness has turned into contains the other nine

realms. That is, Suchness is capable of evidencing itself by way of the different manifestations of each realm. Chuandeng stresses that one thought is equal to one realm. One thought contains all the realms and, therefore, anyone can transform one realm into another, by transforming one thought into another.

Chuandeng's idea about essence and function is similar to Zhili's. That is, "the principle includes three thousand worlds" 理具三千 and "the phenomenal activities contain three thousand worlds" 事造三千. As Zhili said, "When the essence of the three thousand worlds follows conditions, it activates the function of the three thousand worlds. When it does not follow conditions, the three thousand worlds are intact as they are."[30] Both Chuandeng and Zhili develop Zhiyi's idea of "Three Thousand Worlds in One Thought." Chuandeng's focus, however, shifts from the three thousand worlds to that of the ten realms. He uses the combination of the hidden and the manifested ten realms to connect essence with function showing phenomenal activities to be the inherent capability of essence.

The Third Gate: The Unchanging Follows Conditions, the Non-differentiated Is the Differentiated (*Bu bian sui yuan wu cha er cha* 不變隨緣, 無差而差)

In the third and fourth gates, Chuandeng demonstrates that Suchness as essence is identical to its function. On the one hand, all the ten realms hidden in Suchness are not different from each other and are the same as Suchness, but they can follow conditions and manifest ten different realms. This is the meaning of "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" (*wu cha er cha* 無差而差). On the other hand, although there are

[30] Zhili, *Shi bu er men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 715b.

differences among the manifestations of the ten realms, the differences can return to the non-differentiated nature of the ten realms. This is the meaning of "the differentiated remain non-differentiated" (*cha er wu cha* 差而無差). These two concepts are at the core of Chuandeng's nature-inclusion thought.

Chuandeng broadly takes from Zhili's ideas. "Differentiated" and "non-differentiated" are terms Zhili used to mark a distinction between the Tiantai and the Huayan. For Zhili, the Huayan position wrongly held that the pure mind as essence represents the non-differentiated Buddha realm by itself. This would mean that the pure mind excludes the differences of the nine realms as caused by defiled thoughts. In other words, the differences appear only *after* the pure mind has followed conditions and has mixed with ignorance. Thus, only after ignorance is cut off can there be non-differentiated Suchness, putting the non-differentiated pure mind as essence outside the differentiated nine realms. That is, the Buddha realm is separate from the nine realms and essence is not identical to function. As Zhili said:

> "The other schools know that the one-principle when it is following conditions creates the differentiated dharmas. The differentiated [dharmas] are the [various] appearances of ignorance, while the pure oneness is the character of Suchness. There are the differentiated when [Suchness] follows conditions. There is the non-differentiated when Suchness does not follow conditions. Therefore, there are differences when one-nature mixes with ignorance. This is the concept of mixing but not the non-duality of essence and [the differentiated dharmas], because there is the non-differentiated only *after* ignorance is cut off."[31]

For Zhili, the Tiantai view regards the immutability of Suchness as the immutability of the Three Thousand Worlds inherent in nature. The differences of the Three Thousand Worlds are inherent in nature even when Suchness is not following conditions. Their differences always exist whether or not Suchness follows conditions and whether or not

[31] Ibid.

ignorance exists. The non-difference of Suchness does not preclude the differences of the Three Thousand Worlds. Outside the differentiated there is no Suchness. Zhili put it this way:

> "My school understands that when following conditions essence as the Three Thousand activates the functioning of the Three Thousand. When it is not following conditions, the Three Thousand are intact as they are. Therefore, the differentiated dharmas and essence are non-dual because even though ignorance is cut off the differentiated remain."[32]

This is Zhili's view on the identity of essence and function; that is, the Buddha realm and the nine realms are not different. Although he says that essence and function are identical to each other, Zhili did not deny the non-differentiated feature of essence and the differentiated feature of following conditions. What he denied is the separation of the non-differentiated from the differentiated. For Zhili, essence is non-differentiated but it still includes the differentiated Three Thousand Worlds. This is why he said, "The non-differentiated is the differentiated." Although the nine realms are different, they are still the same as the non-differentiated essence. That is why he said, "The differentiated remain non-differentiated."[33]

Chuandeng follows in Zhili's footsteps, but he is even more emphatic in demonstrating the non-duality of essence and function. Chuandeng also emphasizes that nature already contains the differentiated phenomena so that non-differentiated Suchness can manifest the differentiated. He points out that the focus of the third gate is different from that of the second gate. While the second gate stresses that "Suchness has the capabilities to follow the pure and the defiled conditions as well as to differentiate the ten

---

[32] Ibid.

[33] Zhili, *Siming zun zhe jiao xing lu* 四明尊者教行錄, T46: 881a.

realms,"[34] the third gate emphasizes the identity of essence and function, but the approach of this gate begins from the aspect of essence. That is, Chuandeng directly assigns the cultivated good and the cultivated evil (function) to the inherent good and the inherent evil (essence). As he says: "It is exactly because unchanging Suchness as essence includes the two natures of good and evil. When it is following conditions, it functions as the good and the evil."[35]

Although the respective inherent good of the Buddha realm and the respective inherent evil of the nine realms exist in nature, Chuandeng does not regard them as separate parts of Suchness but regards each as the whole of Suchness, because Suchness as Reality is indivisible. Everything in its own nature is included in Suchness and thus must be Reality. For this reason, each nature of each differentiated thing is identical to the entirety of Suchness, the entire hidden ten realms. Accordingly, every differentiated thing, as manifested by its own nature, is actually manifested by the entirety of Suchness, the entire hidden ten realms. As he says,

> "It is the entire essence, unchanging Suchness, that is activating the function of following conditions. It is the non-differentiated that becomes the differentiated."[36]

Chuandeng's distinct thinking about the non-duality of essence and function in nature-inclusion thought is reflected in his use of the seven elements as discussed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. According to him, among all the Mahāyāna sutras that teach the Round Teaching, "none surpass the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* in terms of illuminating the

---

[34] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 391a.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 391b.

[differentiated] appearances of all things."[37] Even though the sutra does not mention inherent good and inherent evil, it holds that the nature of the seven elements *is* the pure mind of tathāgatagarbha, which makes the nature of the seven elements equal to the tathāgatagarbha. In this equivalency, Chuandeng sees that each nature of the seven elements is "included" in the pure mind thus, the ten realms, as represented by the seven elements, are hidden in the pure mind as inherent good and inherent evil and are not different from Suchness. Although the seven elements hidden in nature are non-differentiated, when the pure mind follows conditions, their own natures can manifest as the differentiated cultivated good and cultivated evil of the ten realms.

For a better understanding of Chuandeng's analysis, let us explore the seven elements in some detail as presented in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. Traditionally, in Buddhism, it is said that earth, water, fire, and wind are the four elements (*si da* 四大) that constitute all the material things of the universe. A unique feature of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is that it expands the elements from four to seven to describe both the material and mental fields of the universe. For the sutra, there are five elements, the traditional four elements plus the empty space element (*kong da* 空大), that form the material field, and the two elements of seeing (*jian da* 見大) and consciousness (*shi da* 識大) form the mental field.

In fact, the seven elements are a condensed version of the eighteen fields mentioned above, one of the many ways by which Buddhism describes the universe. That is, the universe can be grouped into eighteen fields, six sense-organs, six objects, and six

[37] Ibid.

consciousnesses.[38] Their relationship occurs when the six sense-organs of sentient beings meet their respective six objects, then the six consciousnesses of sentient beings arise. Six objects form the material field which is the world that sentient beings perceive, while six sense-organs and six consciousnesses form the mental field that performs the perceptive function for sentient beings. The sutra compresses the eighteen fields into seven elements. Among the seven elements, the first five elements that form the material field represent the six objects. The other two elements of seeing and consciousness that form the mental field represent the six sense-organs together with the six consciousnesses; because seeing element, as the perceptive function of the eye sense-organ of sentient beings, represents all the six sense-organs (or all the six functions of the six sense-organs), and the consciousness element represents all the six consciousnesses. Therefore, the seven elements as a compressed version of the eighteen fields is a compressed representation of the whole universe.

As I explained above, in order to express his nature-inclusion thought, Chuandeng divides the seven elements into two groups: the circumstantial reward and the direct reward. The first five elements, earth, water, fire, wind, and empty space shape the material field and represent all the circumstantial rewards of the ten realms; in other words, the circumstances into which sentient beings are born. The two elements of seeing and consciousness shape the mental field and represent all the direct rewards; in other words, the sentient beings of the ten realms.[39] For Chuandeng, the seven elements thus represent the ten realms. He demonstrates that the seven elements are inherent in nature

---

[38] The six sense-organs are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The six objects of the six sense-organs are form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and idea. The six consciousnesses are the consciousnesses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

[39] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 391b.

to show that all the different direct rewards and circumstantial rewards of the ten realms are included in nature.

The following quote shows how he combines the teachings of seven elements in the sutra with nature-inclusion thought. He says:

> "The passage of the seven elements [in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*] fully elucidates the meaning that the nature of form (earth) is true emptiness (*xing se zhen kong* 性色真空) and so forth. It also explains the meaning of following conditions in that [Suchness] follows the minds of the sentient beings in response to the capacity of their understanding. The five elements, earth, water, fire, wind and empty space, are the circumstantial rewards of the ten realms. The two elements, seeing and consciousness, are the direct rewards of the ten realms. Now I cite all [of the seven elements] to illuminate the meaning of the above. This enables the devout believers of the Tiantai to rely on this scriptural authority and to understand that the doctrine the Tiantai claims is profoundly in accord with the core of Buddhism."[40]

Chuandeng is here upholding the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the highest Round teaching proving the scriptural authority of Tiantai nature-inclusion thought. He then gives a detailed three-step analysis of each of the seven elements explaining them by way of essence and function in order to prove the veracity of nature-inclusion thought.

In the first step, Chuandeng views the sutra as saying that nature is not limited to the phenomenal entities as shaped by the seven elements. In the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, it is said that it is impossible to find the nature of the seven elements by way of analyzing a phenomenal entity. For example, the sutra says it is incorrect to conclude that empty space is the nature of earth element. The combination of empty space and empty space is still empty space but not earth, and the combination of earth and earth is still earth but not empty space. Therefore, the phenomenal empty space could not be the nature of earth element. The same with the wind element, when one shakes one's robe to fan oneself, the wind blows into one's face. The wind, however, neither comes from the robe, the face, or

---

[40] Ibid.

the empty space in which one finds oneself, nor does it come from the combination of the robe, the face, and the empty space. Therefore, one can conclude that these three phenomenal entities are not the nature of wind element. So is the case with the element of empty space: when one digs the soil to create a well, the result is the empty space of the well. This empty space, however, does not come from the soil or the action of digging, nor does it come from the combination of the two. Therefore, neither of these phenomenal entities are the nature of empty space. The element of seeing is the same. Its function is to see the brightness and the darkness of empty space. Seeing, however, does not come from brightness, darkness, or empty space. Therefore, these three phenomenal entities are not the nature of seeing element. In sum, the sutra shows that the nature of the seven elements cannot be found in the phenomenal activities of the seven elements.[41]

According to Chuandeng's reinterpretation, "By using the visible seven elements, what the sutra begins to illuminate are the phenomenal activities of cultivated good and cultivated evil but not the inherent good and the inherent evil."[42] As mentioned previously, for Chuandeng, the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and empty space represent all the circumstantial rewards of the ten realms, while the two elements of seeing and consciousness form all the direct rewards. Therefore, the phenomenal activities of the seven elements represent all the phenomenal activities of the ten realms. Consequently, according to Chuandeng, the sutra says that if we perceive a phenomenon within the seven elements—a phenomenon within the ten realms—without realizing that its nature includes the ten realms, what is perceived is not the Reality of the

---

[41] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 117c-19a.

[42] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 393b.

phenomenon—the Reality being Suchness—and therefore Suchness cannot be found in this kind of perception. In other words, the incorrectly perceived entity is only the cultivated good or the cultivated evil but not the inherent good or the inherent evil. As Chuandeng says, "the [phenomenal] entity resulting from [Suchness] following conditions is delusion [when perceived without the insight provided by the nature-inclusion thought.]"[43] In other words, the wrongly perceived phenomenal seven elements are not their own natures.

In the second step of his explanation, Chuandeng holds that the sutra further demonstrates "the principle of Suchness as nature-inclusion " (*zhen ru xing ju zhi li* 真如性具之理).[44] The seven elements in their own natures as inherent good and inherent evil are included in Suchness and these natures are not different from one another and are the same as Suchness. In the first step, it says that phenomenal activities are not the nature of the seven elements, but it does not mean that the seven elements come from nowhere. Accordingly, for the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, each nature of the seven elements is the tathāgatagarbha as Suchness. For Chuandeng, this is the most relevant part of the sutra for it shows nature-inclusion thought.

Chuandeng begins his extensive elaboration with the earth element. In the sutra, the earth element is also called "form element" (*se* 色):

> "… In the tathāgatagarbha, the nature of form (earth-nature) is true emptiness (*xing se zhen kong* 性色真空), and the nature of emptiness is true form (*xing kong zhen se* 性空真色). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[45]

---

[43] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 391b.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 117c. "如來藏中。性色真空。性空真色。清淨本然。周遍

The sutra suggests that the earth-nature is identical to true emptiness, the tathāgatagarbha, and emptiness is the true earth element (earth-nature) in the tathāgatagarbha. In other words, earth-nature is no different from emptiness—the tathāgatagarbha (Suchness)—which is pure and pervades everywhere.

Through the lens of nature-inclusion, Chuandeng significantly glosses over the above quote. He claims that the sutra shows that the earth element has its own particular nature as inherent earth included in Suchness. He sees "the nature of form (earth-nature)" 性色 to be "inherent form" 性色. Notice that the characters do not change, what changes is the meaning. The sutra suggests that the earth-nature as emptiness is the true earth element in Suchness and that it is no different from Suchness. Therefore, for Chuandeng, the earth-nature as "inherent form (earth)" is true earth element in and as Suchness. Thus, Chuandeng views the sutra as directly saying that "inherent form" is "included" in Suchness and it is no different from Suchness. It is pure and pervades everywhere.

The sutra explains the natures of the first four elements, earth, fire, water, and wind in a similar way. For example, for the fire element, the sutra says:

> "In the tathāgatagarbha, the nature of fire is true emptiness (*xing huo zhen kong* 性火真空), and the nature of emptiness is true fire (*xing kong zhen huo* 性空真火). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[46]

For the water element, the sutra says:

> "In the tathāgatagarbha, the nature of water is true emptiness (*xing shui zhen kong* 性水真空), and the nature of emptiness is true water (*xing kong zhen shui* 性空真

法界。"

[46] Ibid., See the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19:117c. See also *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 392a.

> 水). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[47]

For the wind element, the sutra says:

> "In the tathāgatagarbha, the nature of wind is true emptiness (*xing feng zhen kong* 性風真空), and the nature of emptiness is true wind (*xing kong zhen feng* 性空真風). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[48]

In this way, inherent fire (fire-nature) 性火, inherent water (water-nature) 性水, and inherent wind (wind-nature) 性風 are all included in Suchness *respectively* and they are all pure and everywhere; they are no different from Suchness—the true emptiness, the tathāgatagarbha—and thus no different from one another.

To further explain the above four quotations, Chuandeng coins the terms "phenomenal form" (*xiang se* 相色), "phenomenal fire" (*xiang huo* 相火), "phenomenal water" (*xiang se* 相水), and "phenomenal wind" (*xiang se* 相風) in contrast to inherent form, inherent fire, inherent water, and inherent wind. This is Chuandeng's interpretation of earth element:

> "This refers to the earth element contained in the unchanging essence of Suchness. It is spoken thus in contrast to the empty space element. Nature (Suchness) is spoken in contrast to phenomena. There are 'inherent form' 性色 and 'phenomenal form' 相色. There are 'inherent empty space' (inherent emptiness) 性空 and 'phenomenal empty space' (phenomenal emptiness) 相空, 'Phenomenal form' and 'phenomenal empty space' are the form and the empty space generated by the ten realms [hidden in nature when] following pure or defiled conditions. [These phenomenal] form and empty space are the cultivated good and the cultivated evil. Now [this quote from the sutra] is about the form and empty space of inherent good and inherent evil. These [inherent] form and [inherent] empty space are in the one-nature and their essences are non-dual and non-differentiated. They are also non-dual with the nature-essence of the Three Virtues included [in the Suchness] and are non-differentiated from it. Therefore, they are pure and pervade everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[49]

---

[47] Ibid., T19: 118a; X57: 392c.

[48] Ibid., T19: 118b; X57: 393c.

[49] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 391c. "此指真如不變體中。所具一分地大。所對一分空

In his understanding, "inherent form" follows conditions and manifests as the "phenomenal form" of the ten realms. In other words, **inherent form** is the earth element of the inherent good and the inherent evil of the ten realms, and **phenomenal form** is the earth element of the cultivated good and the cultivated evil of the ten realms. By the same token, phenomenal fire, phenomenal water, and phenomenal wind of the ten realms are manifested by the particular inherent fire, inherent water, and inherent wind when the respective natures follow conditions.

In the above interpretation, we see that Chuandeng is establishing a new kind of relationship between the earth element and the fifth element of empty space. He does the same with the elements of fire, water, and wind. This relationship between the first four elements and the element of empty space is another way for Chuandeng to prove that the first five elements inherent in nature are no different from one another.

In the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, the Chinese character "空" (*kong*) carries two meanings, one being the fifth element of "empty space," as in the space in which the entire universe finds itself (including the ten realms). The other is "emptiness," as in "the nature of the tathāgatagarbha" or Reality. The sutra says that "the nature of empty space" (*xing kong* 性空) is emptiness (*xing kong* 性空) as tathāgatagarbha, but what Chuandeng sees is that "inherent empty space" is emptiness. Thus, he combines the two meanings of *kong* and creates an essence-function relationship between the two. Therefore, emptiness as the *inherent* empty space can manifest as the *phenomenal* empty space when emptiness is

---

大者為言。文言性者。對相而言。蓋有性色。有相色。有性空。有相空。相色相空。乃十法界隨染淨緣造成色之與空。即修善修惡也。今指性善性惡之色空。而此色空。在一性中。體恒不二。亦無差別。與所具三德之性。體亦不二。無有差別。故曰清淨本然周遍法界。"

following conditions. Thus, "inherent empty space" 性空 is "inherent emptiness" 性空 and "phenomenal empty space" (*xiang kong* 相空) is "phenomenal emptiness" 相空.

According to the sutra, the original meaning of this passage "In the tathāgatagarbha, *the nature of form* (earth-nature) is true emptiness 性色真空, and *the nature of emptiness* is true form 性空真色" is that the earth-nature is emptiness. However, Chuandeng reinterprets it as that inherent earth 性色 is inherent empty space 性空—the nature of the fifth element—and thus takes this passage to mean that both natures are no different from each other in Suchness. Consequently, inherent fire, inherent water, and inherent wind are inherent empty space and they are no different from one another in Suchness.

Chuandeng further expands his reinterpretation of the sutra by saying that inherent form and inherent empty space can manifest the phenomenal earth and phenomenal empty space of the ten realms. Thus, inherent form and inherent empty space are the earth and empty space elements of the inherent good and the inherent evil of the ten realms. Furthermore, since inherent earth and inherent empty space are in non-differentiated Suchness, both are no different from the entirety of Suchness (the ten realms inherent in Suchness)—they are all pure and they pervade everywhere.

As we can see in the four quotations, the sutra connects the first four elements to the emptiness of tathāgatagarbha. Chuandeng uses a similar style to introduce his reinterpretation of what the sutra is saying about the fire, water, and wind elements:

> "…Now [this quote] is about the fire and empty space of inherent good and inherent evil. These [inherent] fire and [inherent] empty space are in the one-nature and their essences are non-dual and non-differentiated. They are also non-dual with the nature-essence of the Three Virtues included [in the tathāgatagarbha] and are non-differentiated from it. Therefore, they are pure and pervade everywhere in the

Dharma-realm."[50]

When discussing the first four elements, the sutra describes the tathāgatagarbha as emptiness, showing that the last three elements, empty space, seeing, and consciousness, which all relate to the mental sphere, are identical to enlightenment (*jue* 覺). Enlightenment is another way to refer to tathāgatagarbha. For example, regarding the empty space element, the sutra says:

> "In the tathāgatagarbha, *the nature of enlightenment* is true empty space (*xing jue zhen kong* 性覺真空), and the nature of empty space is *true enlightenment* (*xing kong zhen jue* 性空真覺). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[51]

Similarly, the sutra also connects the elements of seeing and consciousness to the tathāgatagarbha as enlightenment. As with the seeing element and consciousness elements, the sutra says:

> "In the tathāgatagarbha, the nature of seeing is the illuminating enlightenment (*xing jian jue ming* 性見覺明), and the essence of enlightenment is the illuminating seeing (*jue jing ming jian* 覺精明見). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[52]

> "In the tathāgatagarbha, the nature of consicousnes is illuminating understanding (enlightenment) (*xing shi ming zhi* 性識明知), and the illuminating enlightenment is true consciousness (*jue ming zhe shi* 覺明真識). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm."[53]

"Inherent empty space" (*xing kong* 性空), "inherent seeing" (*xing jian* 性見), and "inherent consciousness" (*xing shi* 性識) in their own particular natures are all included in Suchness and are no different from the tathāgatagarbha as enlightenment. Therefore,

[50] Ibid., 392a-b.

[51] See the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 118b. See also *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 394b-c.

[52] Ibid., T19: 118c-19a; X57: 395b.

[53] Ibid., T19: 119a; X57: 396a.

these three inherent elements are pure, everywhere, and no different from one another or from the entirety of Suchness, i.e., the inherent good and the inherent evil of the ten realms. And, they can manifest as phenomenal empty space (*xiang kong* 相空), phenomenal seeing (*xiang jian* 相見), and phenomenal consciousness (*xiang shi* 相識) respectively, which are the three elements of the cultivated good and the cultivated evil of the ten realms.[54]

Chuandeng's explanation makes another connection to demonstrate the non-difference of the seven elements in Suchness. He first connects the first four inherent elements to the fifth element of inherent empty space through the tathāgatagarbha as emptiness and thus demonstrates that these five are no different from one another. Then, he connects inherent empty space to inherent seeing and inherent consciousness through the tathāgatagarbha as enlightenment and thus demonstrates that these three are no different from one another. Finally, by connecting inherent empty space to the other six inherent elements, Chuandeng demonstrates that all the seven elements are no different from each other in Suchness and are the same as the entirety of Suchness.

In this second step, Chuandeng reinterprets that the sutra demonstrates the respective natures of the seven elements are all inherently included in Suchness, are pure and pervade everywhere, and are no different from Suchness. For him, this also shows that the differentiated direct rewards and circumstantial rewards of the ten realms are all included in nature, since the seven elements represent all the direct rewards and circumstantial rewards of the ten realms. Therefore, Chuandeng sees that the seven elements, regarded as pure mind by the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, are the inherent good and

---

[54] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 394c, 395b, 396a.

inherent evil of the ten realms. This is the state of the ten realms hidden in nature when Suchness does not follow conditions.

In the third step, Chuandeng asserts that the sutra continues to show that the seven elements in their own natures are non-differentiated yet they can manifest the differentiated cultivated good and cultivated evil when following conditions.

At the end of the passage for each element, the sutra says that the tathāgatagarbha as the pure nature of each element can "follow the minds of the sentient beings in response to the capacity of their understanding, and [the element] manifests in accord with their karma."[55] The sutra emphasizes that the tathāgatagarbha, as the nature of each element, follows the minds (thoughts) and karmas of sentient beings to manifest the different phenomenal elements. For Chuandeng, this means precisely that *each* nature of *each* element as the entirety of Suchness follows the minds and karmas in manifesting the ten realms. It also demonstrates that nature as essence has the function to follow conditions.

It is minds (thoughts) and karmas of the ten realms that each nature of the seven elements follows. As Chuandeng explains, "The conditions that [the element] follows are mind and karma. Mind means the pure and defiled minds of the ten realms. Karma means the good and the evil karmas of the ten realms."[56] He argues that the wisdom of the Buddha is the pure mind, while the afflictions of the nine realms are the defiled minds. The karmas of the Buddha realm that are in accord with the understanding of nature are good karmas, while the karmas of the nine realms that are in violation of the understanding of nature are evil karmas. For him, since the respective natures of the

---

[55] See, for example, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 117c. See also *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 391c.

[56] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 391c.

seven elements are no different from Suchness, each of them can follow the minds and karmas of the ten realms and manifest the particular element of the different cultivated good and cultivated evil of the ten realms.

In the same manner, Chuandeng interprets, one by one, how each element follows conditions and manifests itself accordingly in any one of the ten realms.[57] As with the earth element, he first explains how the earth element manifests in the Buddha realm. He says that inherent form as "essence of the inherent good of the Buddha realm " (*fo jie xing shan zhi ti* 佛界性善之體), when following the pure mind (thought) of the Buddha realm, can manifest the phenomenal "forms of the cultivated good of the Buddha realm" (*fo jie xiu shan zhi se* 佛界修善之色).[58] To explain the manifestation of the earth element in the Buddha realm, Chuandeng discusses it in two parts, the part of the direct reward and the part of the circumstantial reward. To illuminate the part of direct reward, his example is Earth-holding bodhisattva (*Chidi pu sa* 持地菩薩) who is discussed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* because this bodhisattva attained Buddhahood by practicing the "interpenetration of the earth element." Chuandeng asserts that the direct reward is the perfect form (earth) of the threefold body of the Earth-holding bodhisattva; that is, the infinite form of the Dharma-body (*Dharmakāya*), the eighty-four thousands marks of the reward body (*Sambhogakāya*), and the eighty marks of the transformation body (*Nirmāṇakāya*). As for the earth element of the circumstantial reward, it is the abode of the Buddha, the land of eternal peace and light (*chang ji guang* 常寂光). For Chuandeng, the Buddha's threefold body (direct reward) and the pure land in which the Buddha

---

[57] Ibid., 381c-91a.

[58] Ibid., 391c.

dwells (circumstantial reward) are inherent in nature as inherent earth, and therefore, they can manifest the phenomenal direct and circumstantial rewards as the "earth of the cultivated good of the Buddha realm" when following the pure mind of the Buddha.[59] In another one of his works, *On the Rebirth as Non-birth in the Pure Land* 淨土生無生論, he also uses nature-inclusion thought to interpret the doctrine of the Pure Land school. He views pure land as inherent good included in nature and, therefore, it can manifest the phenomenal pure land when following the condition of the mind that practices Buddha contemplation (*nianfo* 念佛). In fact, nature-inclusion thought is also the basis by which he harmonizes the Pure Land school with Tiantai thought.

In terms of the nine realms, Chuandeng says, "The [earth element as] 'essence of inherent evil of the nine realms' (*jiu jie xing shan zhi ti* 九界性善之體) in unchanging Suchness can follow the defiled mind of the nine realms and manifest 'the forms of the cultivated evil of the nine realms.' (*jiu jie xiu shan zhi se* 九界修善之色)"[60] Similarly, for him, the direct and circumstantial rewards of the nine realms from the bodhisattva realm down to the hell realm are the "earth element of cultivated evil" manifested by the "earth element of inherent evil." The direct rewards of the nine realms are the forms (earth) of the transformed bodies experienced by the sages of the three vehicles (śrāvaka, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas) as well as the forms of the reincarnations of the six non-enlightened realms (hell, hungry ghost, animal, asura, human, and god). The circumstantial rewards of the nine realms are: the form of the land of permanent reward free of all barriers (*shi bao wu zhang ai tu* 實報無障礙土) for bodhisattvas; the form of

---

[59] Ibid., 391c.

[60] Ibid.

the temporary land (*fang bian you yu tu* 方便有餘土) for the two vehicles (śrāvaka and pratyekabuddhas); and the form of the unenlightened-and-enlightened-dwell-together land (*fan sheng tong ju tu* 凡聖同居土) for the beings of the six non-enlightened realms. All these lands as cultivated evils are manifested by the earth element of the nine realms of inherent evil that follows the defiled thoughts of beings living in the nine realms.

Chuandeng reminds the reader that the human realm, with all its corresponding direct rewards and circumstantial rewards, is still the cultivated evil which is the retribution as manifested by the inherent earth when following the defiled minds and evil karmas of the human realm.[61] For him, the defiled minds and evil karmas of the human realm are the thoughts and actions of keeping the five precepts and the ten good deeds.[62] He says that although these thoughts and actions are good compared to that of the lower realms, they are evil compared to the Buddha realm. Therefore, a human being cannot attain Buddhahood by only cultivating the five precepts and the ten good deeds. A person can only attain Buddhahood by cultivating a pure mind of Buddha-wisdom and the good karma of the Six Perfections (pāramitās).[63]

Likewise, Chuandeng uses the direct and circumstantial rewards perspective to explain that each nature of the seven elements is the non-differentiated inherent good and inherent evil and that each can follow pure or defiled conditions to manifest the corresponding phenomenal element of the cultivated good of the Buddha realm or the

---

[61] Ibid.

[62] The five precepts are no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no lying, and no intoxicants. The ten good deeds are no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lying, no slandering, no harsh speech, no idle talk, no greed, no hatred, and no wrong views. In Buddhism, these are essential for rebirth into the human realm.

[63] The six excellent practices, which lead one to the "other shore" of liberation, are charity, morality, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom.

cultivated evil of the nine realms. This is the manner by which he affirms that the seven elements discussed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* clearly demonstrate nature-inclusion thought.

At the end of the third gate, he stresses,

> "All of the above quotes about the seven elements as cited from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* present the essential meaning of 'unchanging Suchness is following conditions and the non-differentiated is the differentiated.' These are the true words spoken by the golden mouth of the Thus-come One. [Nature-inclusion thought] is not intentionally fabricated by the Tiantai. If you believe the Thus-come One, you then believe the Tiantai. If you believe the Tiantai, you then truly believe the Thus-come One."[64]

To prove his theory about the non-duality of essence and function, in his three-step process, Chuandeng uses the seven elements of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to demonstrate that nature-inclusion thought is not created out of whole cloth, but that it is the teaching given by the Buddha in person. Non-differentiated Suchness already contains the differentiated seven elements, and therefore it can follow conditions and manifest the differentiated seven elements of the ten realms. In sum, for Chuandeng, inherent good and inherent evil are the entirety of non-differentiated Suchness, and the differentiated cultivated good and cultivated evil are the functioning of the entirety of Suchness.

The Fourth Gate: Following Conditions yet without Change, Differentiated yet Non-Differentiated (*sui yuan bu bian cha er wu cha* 隨緣不變, 差而無差)

The title of the fourth gate indicates that all differentiated things can return to the non-differentiated essence. Chuandeng continues to use the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as the authoritative scripture to support his idea. He holds that the seven elements of the sutra

---

[64] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 396b.

already illuminate that "the non-differentiated is the differentiated," thus it simultaneously expresses that "the differentiated remain non-differentiated." For him, these two dynamics share the same meaning.

He argues that these two dynamics can be understood by the perspectives of essence and function. From the perspective of essence, these two dynamics are already within Suchness itself:

> "Speaking of the tathāgatagarbha of one-nature, how could there be the differentiated? Since the tathāgatagarbha as nature contains the respective natures of the seven elements which differ from one another and are capable of being good and evil factors, then the meaning of 'the non-differentiated is the differentiated' is evident. Although the respective natures of the seven elements are differentiated, they actually exist in the one-nature. Then, the point is evident that 'the differentiated remain non-differentiated.' This core meaning is already demonstrated in the one-nature alone."[65]

In short, contained within the one-nature as Suchness are the dynamics of "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" and "the differentiated remain non-differentiated," because the one-nature contains the seven particular natures and the seven natures remain one within Suchness.

From the perspective of function, Chuandeng similarly claims that the two dynamics are also found within phenomenal manifestation:

> "When the [one-nature] follows the defiled and the pure conditions to manifest the ten realms, defilement and purity are differentiated and the good and the evil become divided. In fact, from the essence as unchanging Suchness, the non-differentiated follows conditions to manifest the differentiated. This means that 'the non-differentiated is the differentiated.' Since the unchanging can follow conditions, it must remain unchanging when following conditions. Therefore, when it follows conditions to manifest the ten realms, it is called "the differentiated remain non-differentiated."[66]

---

[65] Ibid., 396b. "蓋以如來藏一性言之。尚何差別之有。然而藏性之中。既具七大之性。各各不同。能為善不善因。則無差而差之義見矣。雖復七大自性有異。其實同居一性之中。此則差而無差之旨見矣。惟其一性。已具斯旨。"

[66] Ibid. "是故能隨染淨緣。具造十法界時。則染淨雖異。而善惡攸分。其實從真如不變體中無差。而

In sum, since every differentiated good or evil thing is manifested from the entirety of Suchness, then every differentiated good or evil thing as the entirety of Suchness remains non-differentiated. Therefore, the two dynamics are evidenced within function. What this implies is that all the good and evil things are included in each differentiated good or evil thing because each differentiated good or evil thing is identical to the entirety of Suchness—the ten realms. Thus, all things are mutually included in one another and the good and the evil are mutually included in each other.

Chuandeng shows that "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" is the same as "the differentiated remain non-differentiated." For him, these two dynamics are two sides of the same coin and they demonstrate that essence is identical to function. He asserts that the seven elements discussed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* already clearly show the two dynamics. He analyzes the example from the sutra about the fire element following conditions to explain his theory. The sutra's example is how a dry leaf can catch fire by holding a mirror reflecting the sun's rays onto it. The sutra says, "If a person holds a mirror in one certain place, fire can appear in that place. If mirrors are held throughout the Dharma-realm, then fire can appear all over the world. Since fire can appear throughout the world, how could [the nature of fire] be confined to a certain place?"[67] Chuandeng then likens the sun to Suchness and the different fires at different places to its functioning as a result of following conditions. He points out that the fires that appear at all places all come from the same sun. Therefore, the sun can be likened to non-differentiated fire nature. For him, one can make a fire at any different place from the

---

隨緣差別。以此謂之無差而差。既不變而隨緣。必隨緣而不變。是故隨緣造十界時。謂之差而無差。"

[67] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 117c.

same sun, meaning, “the non-differentiated is the differentiated.” All the different fires at different places have the same fire nature, meaning, “the differentiated remain non-differentiated.”

Chuandeng further claims that not only fire but also any heat can be considered to be fire because fire has the basic quality of heat (*nuan xing* 暖性). For example, well water becomes warm when the sun appears in winter. This too is fire. The spring sun brings vigor to all plants. This is also fire. Rubbing the body to make it warm is fire as well. He sees that fire nature is pure and everywhere, but people only see the different phenomenal fires of the direct and circumstantial rewards and become confused about the true nature of fire as Suchness. Through the example of fire, he maintains that the seven elements mentioned in the sutra already give a complete doctrinal explanation of the two dynamics.[68] Therefore, in this gate, instead of explaining the doctrine, he uses ten metaphors to reinforce the concept of the unity of essence and function. Except for the third metaphor, all the metaphors he uses are from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.

The first is the ice-water metaphor (*bing shui yu* 冰水喻).[69] In the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, the Buddha uses the idea that “water can become ice and ice can return to water” to show that a phenomenal entity and its nature are identical.[70] Chuandeng then holds that the Buddha uses this metaphor to show that unchanging Suchness can follow conditions, yet it is still unchanging. On the one hand, the contents of ice and water are identical, and on the other, the contents can change its appearance when following

---

[68] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 396c.

[69] Ibid., 396c-97a.

[70] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 117b.

conditions. He explains that the water element has the basic quality of moisture (*shi xing* 濕性) and likens moisture to Suchness. Moisture follows severe cold and becomes ice, but moisture does not change. It follows the spring sun and becomes water, but moisture remains the same. He likens the severe cold to the defiled conditions and the spring sun to the pure conditions. Water is analogous to the phenomena of the Buddha realm and ice to the phenomena of the nine realms. Therefore, nature follows the pure conditions and manifests the Buddha realm, but nature as Suchness does not lessen. It follows the defiled conditions and manifests the nine realms, but nature as Suchness does not increase. Chuandeng asserts that this metaphor presents the essential idea of the seven elements discussed in the sutra. That is, "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" and "the differentiated remain non-differentiated."

The second is the container-space metaphor (*qi kong yu* 器空喻).[71] In the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, this metaphor is used by the Buddha to refute Ānanda's false view. Ānanda regards the seeing-nature as an entity that can lengthen and shorten when he perceives that the indoor space is different from the outdoor space he sees. The Buddha then draws an analogy between seeing-nature and empty space. There is a square space when a square container is put in empty space, while there is a round space when a round container is put in empty space. Empty space, however, just like seeing-nature, is neither square nor round, which can be realized by taking away the containers. Chuandeng also likens empty space to Suchness and the different containers to its different functions. Empty space cannot be described as having any size or shape, but it can manifest the spaces of different sizes and shapes when different containers are put into empty space.

---

[71] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 397a-b.

For Chuandeng, this example demonstrates the dynamic of "the non-differentiated is the differentiated." All the spaces of different sizes and shapes belong to the same empty space, which, in turn, is the dynamic of "the differentiated remain non-differentiated." This metaphor therefore expresses the unity of essence and function, the unity of the non-differentiated and the differentiated, and the unity of the inherent good and evil and the cultivated good and evil.

The third is the wave-water metaphor (*bo shui yu* 波水喻).[72] It is cited from *Awakening of Faith*[73] and it is similar to the ice-water metaphor in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. Chuandeng explains that both water and waves have the quality of moisture that is likened to Suchness, and water and wave is likened to Suchness's different functions. The difference between water and wave is that one is unmoving while the other is moving. Yet their qualities of moisture are not different. That is, not only the essence of cultivated good and cultivated evil is non-differentiated but also essence is eternally identical to its function. He claims that this is exactly what "saṁsāra is nirvāṇa" and "affliction is bodhi" mean.

The fourth is the bubble-ocean metaphor (*ou hai yu* 漚海喻).[74] It is used in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* by the Buddha to refute another of Ānanda's wrong views. Ānanda does not recognize that mind-nature as Suchness is everywhere but regards mind-nature as dwelling only in the physical body. The Buddha points out that the physical body, as well as all things in the world, is within mind-nature and are all manifested by it. Thus,

---

[72] Ibid., 397b.

[73] *Awakening of Faith* 大乘起信論, T32: 576c.

[74] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 397b.

the Buddha says that Ānanda's false view is just like ignoring the entire ocean and taking notice only of a single bubble and mistaking it for the entire ocean.[75] Chuandeng likens the ocean to Suchness and a single bubble to the result of following conditions. He points out that the appearance of a small bubble is a result from a function (movement) of the whole ocean, thus the bubble is no different from the whole ocean. Similarly, the whole of Suchness has the function to follow conditions, so the function to follow conditions is exactly the whole of Suchness as essence. In terms of phenomenal appearance, there is a wide gap in the sizes between a bubble and the whole ocean, but the vast ocean is its essence. For him, a bubble and the whole ocean are identical to each other. Chuandeng asserts that the numerous bubbles show that the non-differentiated can manifest the differentiated, while the whole silent ocean shows that essence is unchanging when following conditions. To understand this metaphor is to understand "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" and "the differentiated remain non-differentiated."

Chuandeng notes that the following four metaphors about the elements of water, fire, wind, and empty space are directly borrowed from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and he uses them to make his own analogies to show the deeper meaning of the non-duality of essence and function.

The fifth metaphor is the moon-water metaphor (*yue shui yu* 月水喻).[76] In the sutra, it is about how magicians create water while holding pearls under the moon in the daytime. Chuandeng likens the moon to essence and water to function. He says that

[75] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 110c-11a.

[76] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 397c.

magicians can hold pearls anywhere under the moon and make water appear from the moon. This means that the unchanging moon can follow conditions to manifest water in different places. Since the different waters retrieved from different places are likened to the function of the moon following conditions, the moon, as the essence of the retrieved waters, remains unchanging when it is following conditions.

The sixth is the sun-fire metaphor (*ri huo yu* 日火喻).[77] Here Chuandeng repeats and summarizes the example of the fire element mentioned above.

The seventh is the wind-space metaphor (*feng kong yu* 風空喻).[78] As mentioned before about the wind element, this metaphor is about fanning one's robe to create wind to blow onto one's face. Chuandeng then likens "the wind of empty space" to Suchness and "the wind of blowing onto one's face" to function. Since the different "winds of blowing onto faces" that happen in different places are from "the wind of empty space," Chuandeng asserts that "the wind of empty space" is not different from "the winds of blowing onto faces," and that this clearly shows "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" and "the differentiated remain non-differentiated."

The eighth is the form-space metaphor (*se kong yu* 色空喻).[79] As mentioned before about the empty space element, this metaphor is about how there is a space when one digs out the soil for a well. Chuandeng likens "the space of empty space" to Suchness and "the space within the soil" to function. Since "the space within the soil" can appear by digging out the soil at different places, he holds that "the space of empty space" is

---

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., 397c-98a.

[79] Ibid., 398a.

unchanging and follows conditions to manifest the different "spaces within the soil." This means that, "the non-differentiated is the differentiated." Furthermore, the different "spaces within soils" remain "the space of empty space." This means that, "the differentiated remain non-differentiated."

The ninth is the gold-implement metaphor (*jin qi yu* 金器喻).[80] This metaphor is commonly known in Buddhism and is about gold that can be made into different implements. This metaphor is also included in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.[81] Chuandeng likens refined gold to Suchness and the different implements made from it to function. In particular, he points out that the gold he refers to in his metaphor is refined gold and not gold ore. For him, if gold ore is likened to Buddha-nature and refined gold to the state of attaining Buddhahood, then Buddhahood is separate from the affliction of the nine realms. This reflects the Separate Teaching that says that the Buddha realm is outside of the nine realms. Therefore, he claims that all the different implements made from refined gold have the same essence as refined gold and this is similar to the analogy about "an educated man is not a utensil." That is, Buddha-nature is capable of doing both good and evil. Refined gold as the non-differentiated essence does not prevent itself from functioning as numerous implements and the differentiated implements' essences remain refined gold. Chuandeng holds that these express "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" and "the differentiated remain non-differentiated."

The tenth is the metaphor of warm spring (*yang chun yu* 陽春喻).[82] This metaphor

---

[80] Ibid., 398a.

[81] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 120c.

[82] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 398b.

is about how the warm spring causes plants to grow. It is extended from the sixth metaphor of sun-fire. He likens the warm spring to Suchness and the growth of the different plants to function. Chuandeng points out that as the warm spring begins to permeate everywhere, the plants and forests come into contact with the warm spring and begin to sprout and blossom. Thereupon, warm spring causing all the plants to sprout and blossom expresses “the non-differentiated is the differentiated.” All plants have warm spring inside means “the differentiated remain non-differentiated.”

By the various metaphors above, Chuandeng shows convincingly that a differentiated thing in the ten realms is manifested by the non-differentiated Suchness, which is the entirety of ten realms in its nature. He also shows that a differentiated thing is not different from the whole Suchness, that is, a differentiated thing is identical to the entirety of the non-differentiated ten realms in its inherent nature.

To conclude, in this chapter, we have seen how Chuandeng emphasizes that Suchness *is* the ten realms in their pure state as inherent good and inherent evil. This further demonstrates that inherent evil in Suchness is pure and not different from Suchness, which differs from Zhili who regarded inherent evil in Suchness as defilement. Chuandeng further exhorts that Buddha-nature as Suchness should be described from the perspectives of essence and function and their undeniable unity. Here we see that Chuandeng expands on Zhili’s theory that “the non-differentiated is the differentiated” and “the differentiated remain non-differentiated.” Throughout the four gates, Chuandeng frames everything from the perspective of either essence, function, and the non-duality of both to underscore the importance of the dynamics of “unchanging Suchness follows conditions” to prove more fully the idea of “Buddha-nature includes good and evil.”

These perspectives are evident in his creative diagrams and in his uniquely crafted metaphors.

Most importantly, it is clear that the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is the fundamental text by which Chuandeng proves his theory. He adapts the seven elements topic as discussed in the sutra to express nature-inclusion thought, and this is the basis for Chuandeng's unique ideas. When the sutra speaks about the seven elements, it says that the natures of the seven elements is Suchness (tathāgatagarbha) and that Suchness is pure and everywhere. This statement is important for Chuandeng because in it he sees that each element is *inherent* in Suchness and is no different from the whole Suchness. Thus, to prove his theory that all things of the ten realms are included in nature and each thing is no different from the whole ten realms, Chuandeng directly connects the seven elements to all the direct rewards and circumstantial rewards of the ten realms.

Reflecting the current trend of his time, Chuandeng's reinterpretation of the notion of Suchness as pure mind, as presented in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra,* served to harmonize nature-inclusion thought with nature-origination thought. Chuandeng regarded as pure the inherent good and the inherent evil of the ten realms in Suchness. Upholding this nature-inclusion theory, Chuandeng's reinterpretation demonstrated that there is consistency between the nature-origination idea of the pure mind and the Tiantai idea that Buddha-nature contains the good and the evil. Chuandeng's nature-inclusion thought reinterpretations of the pure mind as discussed in the sutra served to harmonize the divergent schools, and in turn, Chuandeng reinterpreted nature-inclusion thought by way of the sutra's explanation of the pure mind.

Chuandeng's interpretive efforts made inherent evil the central idea of the

Śūraṃgama Sūtra, thus fortifying Tiantai's relevancy in the late Ming. The popularity of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* reached its climax in the late Ming and was highly regarded as a text that proves that there is a consistency among the different Buddhist schools. While Chuandeng demonstrated that nature-inclusion thought is the very core of the sutra itself, he also showed that nature-inclusion thought is the common ground on which all the different Buddhist schools can unify. Chuandeng's response to the significant intellectual trends of his time is reflected in his use of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. This sutra thus was the platform by which he promoted the superior status of the Tiantai School.

Chapter 8 Chuandeng's Theory on the Practice of the Dharma-gate of Inherent Evil

In the previous chapter, Chuandeng demonstrates the non-duality of the inherent and the cultivated through the dynamic of essence and function. This non-dual understanding can only be achieved when it is practicable for sentient beings in their daily lives. Therefore, in the last four gates, Chuandeng introduces the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. He emphasizes that the basic method by which sentient beings can reach Buddhahood is to return each thought of cultivated evil to Suchness. His theory follows the tradition of the Tiantai practice of "contemplation of mind" 觀心. Zhiyi said that any defiled "one thought," because it includes the Three Thousand Worlds, is identical to Buddha-nature. In other words, since the mutual inclusion of all the good and evil things of the ten realms as Reality universally exists in any one thought, any one thought is thus the entirety of Reality, i.e. Buddha-nature. Mutual inclusion is the basis by which Zhiyi presented the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil that proposes that the good of Buddha-nature can be developed from the evil of the nine realms. Following Zhanran's adoption of "unchanging Suchness which can follow conditions," Zhili concentrated on the identity of essence and function to explain the Dharma-gate of inherent evil as the "contemplation of cultivated evil as inherent evil" (*guan xiu e ji xing e* 觀修惡即性惡). For Zhili, as long as one thought of cultivated evil returns to inherent evil, one can become a Buddha, thus "the deluded mind can become a Buddha." Chuandeng uses Zhili's ideas as the framework by which he unfolds the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. To support this framework, Chuandeng uses the seven practices of universal interpenetration by means of the seven elements as discussed in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*.

Similarly, while he reinterprets the Dharma-gate of inherent evil by the practices of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, he simultaneously reinterprets the practices of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* with the Dharma-gate of inherent evil, making the sutra the authoritative scripture of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.

The Fifth Gate: In the Causal Mind All Is Originally Included and Nothing Is Lacking (*Yin xin ben ju hao wu kui qian* 因心本具，毫無虧欠)

In this gate, Chuandeng points out that any one thought (*yi nian* 一念) during daily life is the causal mind (*yin xin* 因心) with which Buddhahood can be attained. Compared to Buddha-nature as Suchness, which includes all things, one thought itself, which a sentient being contemplates at the causal stage, lacks nothing and completely includes all the good and the evil of the ten realms.

Chuandeng begins explaining the fifth gate by defining the causal mind:

> "The causal mind means that the people at the ordinary stage, admiring the fruition of Buddhahood, have the mind as the cause for cultivation. Although the mind has great resolve, it still dwells in *skandhas* (Ch. *yin* 陰, lit.: obscurity or aggregation) in terms of its state. A random thought arises in daily life when the sense-organs meet their objects. It may be good, evil, neutral, mundane or supra-mundane. This thought is the object of contemplation. This [causal] mind which belongs to the sixth consciousness is called the "skandha mind" (*yin xin* 陰心) or "human mind" (*ren xin* 人心)."[1]

Chuandeng is saying here that the causal mind is equivalent to any one random thought that arises in a sentient being's daily activity. But, his emphasis is that even though it is deluded (obscure and aggregated), any one random thought is the starting point for cultivation. Thus, Chuandeng defines the causal mind as the *skandha* mind or the human mind. This random "one thought" was called by Zhiyi "consciousness *skandha*" (*shi yin*

[1] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 398b.

識陰) or “a transient thought” (*jie er xin* 介爾心).[2] Zhili regarded “one thought” as the “deluded mind” (*wang xin* 妄心). But Chuandeng calls “one thought” the “human mind.” Although the names are different, both point to the one thought arising from human activity that results from cultivated good or cultivated evil.

Chuandeng asserts that compared to the effect of Buddhahood, any one thought is the causal mind by which a sentient being can become a Buddha. It means that when one considers any one thought as the object of contemplation and observes that its nature includes the ten realms, one can become a Buddha. In terms of phenomenal activity, when one thought arises, it must belong to one of the ten realms. When one thought (or one realm) appears, it belongs to phenomena. In terms of nature, this means that, “while one realm manifests, the other nine realms are hidden.” In other words, when one thought arises, it is not separated from the other nine realms and it is manifested by the entirety of Suchness, i.e., the entirety of the ten realms. Since the entirety of Suchness functions as any one thought while following conditions, the entirety of Suchness exists in any one thought. Since the entirety of Suchness exists in any one thought, then any one thought is the entirety of Suchness. Therefore, Chuandeng says,

> “Because unchanging Suchness follows conditions, it manifests as this one thought. Since ‘the non-differentiated is differentiated,’ this one thought resulting from following conditions in its present entity is unchanging. This means that ‘the differentiated remain non-differentiated.’”[3]

One thought does not lack any thing in the ten realms, so in its present entity it is identical to Suchness, i.e., Buddha-nature. Therefore, Chuandeng argues that the present entity of one thought can demonstrate Buddha-nature. Chuandeng calls this

---

[2] See, for example, Zhiyi, *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T46: 52b, 54a.

[3] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 398c.

"demonstrating nature (essence) in the present practice (function)" (*ji xiu lun xing* 即修論性).[4] For him, one thought is identical to nature, just like function is identical to essence as illustrated in the ten metaphors discussed in the previous chapter. Accordingly, one thought is the causal mind by which a sentient being can cultivate his or her way to Buddhahood.

A sentient being can also achieve Buddhahood by contemplating phenomenal things other than the mind. Chuandeng cites Zhili to support this, saying:

> "Any one thought, a particle of dust or even one imperceptible atom is nothing but the manifestation of the entirety of Suchness. Since each thing is the manifestation of the entire Dharma-realm, each is the entirety of the interpenetrated Dharma-realm (*yuan rong fa jie* 圓融法界). Since each is the entire Dharma-realm, is there any one thing which does not contain all things?"[5]

Each thing, whether mental or material, in its present entity is manifested by and is exactly the entirety of Suchness. Thus, each thing, including one thought, is no other than Buddha-nature. Each thing invariably includes all things in the ten realms and they are mutually included in one another. Therefore, one can become a Buddha by contemplating a particle of dust because nothing is lacking in it.

However, Chuandeng highlights mind as the aim of practice when on the path to becoming a Buddha. In this way, he remains faithful to the Tiantai practice of "contemplation of mind" 觀心. Both Zhiyi's ideas of "threefold contemplation in one mind" 一心三觀 and "Three Thousand Worlds in one thought" 一念三千 focus on "one thought" as the object of contemplation. That is, by observing any one thought as

---

4 Ibid., X57: 398c.

5 Ibid., X57: 399a. See also Zhili, *Guan wu liang shou fo jing shu miao zong chao* 觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔, T37: 197c.

completely containing the Threefold Truth or the Three Thousand Worlds of the ten realms, one is observing Reality. For this reason, Tiantai thinker Zunshi 遵式 described the Tiantai view of Buddha-nature as follows: "…the Tiantai Round Teaching is about the interpenetration of Buddhas and sentient beings of the ten realms; the true and the provisional reside together in one thought."[6] Chuandeng follows Zhiyi's assertion that each thing has all things included in it, but in terms of degree of difficulty of contemplation, the mind is the easiest to contemplate:

> "The *Avataṃsaka sutra* says, '… The three things, mind, Buddha and sentient beings, are not differentiated.' … Although the three are not differentiated, in terms of what is the easiest way to access essence, it is no other than the mind. Therefore, the great Tiantai master (Zhiyi) says, 'The teaching of the Buddha is too lofty. The scope of sentient beings is too extensive. Both are too difficult [to contemplate] for those who just made the initial resolve. The three things, [mind, Buddha and sentient beings,] are not differentiated, but the contemplation of mind is the easiest.' Therefore, for normal people, I point out that the mind alone is the easiest and most essential way. It does not mean that [the other things such as] body, form, direct rewards or circumstantial rewards do not include all things. Thereby, we know that the form, the mind, the direct and circumstantial rewards of sentient beings, even one thought and one dust particle, are all identical to essence as unchanging Suchness, and do not lack any one thing."[7]

So according to Zhiyi, the level of the Buddha realm and the scope of the other nine realms are too high-minded or too extensive to observe. Thus, only one's own mind is the easiest and most direct way to contemplate. In fact, Zhili also thought that mind is the best way to reach Buddhahood when he was developing the idea of "contemplation of the deluded mind" 妄心觀. Following in their footsteps, Chuandeng also believes that the contemplation of the mind of sentient beings is the easiest, most direct, and essential way to practice on the path toward Buddhahood.

---

6 Zunshi, *Tianzhu bie ji* 天竺別集, X57: 39a.

7 Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 399a. See also Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianhua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T33: 696.

Chuandeng's unique approach is to name "one thought" as "human mind" and in this way he connects the Tiantai practice to the Chan idea of "pointing directly to the human mind, seeing one's nature, and become a Buddha." In doing so, he wishes to harmonize both schools:

> "Nature is Threefold Truth as well as Three Virtues (Dharma-body, wisdom and liberation). Speaking of the Three Thousand dharmas in one thought, the essence [of one thought] is the Dharma-body, and thus each dharma is everywhere in the Dharma-realm. Its nature is wisdom, and thus each dharma is luminous like the sun's brightness in the sky. There is no dark place that is not illuminated, so there is no affliction. It is always in liberation, freeing from the secular world without the ties of life and death. Therefore, this 'human mind' and Buddha-nature are non-dual and non-differentiated. This understanding is called 'seeing one's nature.' This illumination is named 'becoming a Buddha.' When Tiantai talks about [Chan's] 'pointing directly to the human mind, seeing one's nature and become a Buddha' is to see this and attain this."[8]

Chuandeng wants to show that the Tiantai idea of Three Thousands in one thought is at the core of the Chan practice. The human mind that Chan talks about is not different from the Buddha-nature that Tiantai talks about. "Seeing into one's nature" is to understand the "human mind" that includes all the three thousand things as the Three Virtues of the Buddha. The Chan term "becoming a Buddha" means to realize and experience the nature of the human mind containing all things. Accordingly, whether one can become a Buddha or not depends on whether one has the perfect understanding of what one thought is or not. This means that a person must clearly understand that one defiled thought is the same as the undefiled pure mind-nature that includes all things of the ten realms. In the *Commentary on the Record of Tiantai's Transmission of the Buddha's Mind-Seal* 天台傳佛心印記註, Chuandeng also expresses the consistency of the Tiantai and the Chan in the

[8] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 398c.

same way.[9] He makes nature-inclusion thought the common principle by which he harmonizes Chan and Tiantai as scriptural teaching in his effort to revive the Tiantai school.

The Sixth Gate: At the Stage of Fruition within the Perfect Realization, Nothing Has Changed (*Guo di yuan zheng yi wu suo gai* 果地圓證，一無所改)

Compared to the causal mind that lacks nothing of the ten realms, Chuandeng points out that the effect of Buddhahood as Suchness does not possess anything more or less than what the causal mind possesses. Both minds are non-differentiated and no different from Suchness. Thus, the fruition of Buddhahood changes nothing of the causal mind.

In terms of one thought as causal mind, it includes the Three Thousands of the ten realms. Tiantai regards this as the Round Teaching. Chuandeng holds that "the practitioners of the Round Teaching (*yuan xiu xing ren* 圓修行人) contemplates the inconceivable state [of one thought that includes the Three Thousands of the ten realms]. At the Buddha-fruition stage, those who perfectly realize the Round Teaching (*yuan zheng zhe* 圓證者) are realizing this inconceivable state."[10] For him, the Buddha-fruition stage is the Buddha realm manifested by Suchness following pure conditions. Although the other nine realms are hidden in nature, the Three Thousand things of the ten realms contained in Suchness never change.[11]

Chuandeng further shows that the state of Buddha-fruition is that all the ten realms are simultaneously in the Buddha realm. He cites Zhanran's opinion to support his view,

---

[9] Chuandeng, *Tiantai Chuan fo xin yin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註, X57: 366b.

[10] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 399b.

[11] Ibid.

saying:

> "Master Jingxi (Zhanran) says that 'when the Three Thousands have not been revealed, they are all called ignorance. When the Three Thousands have been revealed, they are all called eternity and bliss (the state of nirvāṇa or Buddhahood).'"[12]

Zhanran held that both the mind of sentient beings and Buddha-nature contain the Three Thousand things, but the difference is that the mind of sentient beings is deluded while Buddha-nature is enlightened. When the mind is deluded, Suchness follows defiled conditions and does not reveal the Reality that the Three Thousands are inherent in nature. At this time, all the Three Thousands in nature are in the state of ignorance. When the mind is enlightened, however, Suchness follows pure conditions and reveals the Reality that the Three Thousands are inherent in nature. At this time, all the Three Thousands are in the state of nirvāṇa, i.e., the Reality of the Buddha realm. The mind of sentient beings and Buddha-nature are not different but they manifest the different states of the Three Thousands of the ten realms according to the different conditions.

Chuandeng goes on to quote a great many scriptural texts to emphasize that the ten realms are perfect in the state of Buddhahood and are the state of Buddhahood. He proposes that there are five features that describe the state of Buddhahood. Among the five, the first four are the doctrinal support for the fifth feature that highlights the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Similarly, Chuandeng employs the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* for the doctrinal support to demonstrate the first four features. For him, the sutra adequately proves that the state of Buddhahood is the perfect realization of the ten realms within nature.

The first feature of Buddhahood, he claims, is "the perfect realization of nature as

---

[12] Ibid.

the ten realms" (*yuan zheng shi jie zhi xing* 圓證十界之性). Although Chuandeng argues that plenty of scriptures refer to the perfect realization of the ten realms in the state of Buddhahood, he only uses the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to demonstrate it because "a copy of the sutra is easily accessible to people."[13] This claim shows how popular the sutra was in his time. Chuandeng cites a paragraph from the sutra that is about the identity between the state of the self-realization of the Buddha and both the mundane and supra-mundane worlds of the ten realms. He analyzes this paragraph passage by passage to prove that the ten realms are included in the state of Buddhahood. In the following passage, he sees that the six lower realms of the ten realms are included in the state of Buddhahood:

> "'The tathāgatagarbha is the inherently luminous and wondrous mind. It is mind, it is space, it is earth, it is water, it is wind, it is fire, it is the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. It is form, it is sound, smell, taste, touch, and dharmas. It is the realm of eye-consciousness, and so forth up to the realm of mind-consciousness.' This passage then shows that the Thus-come One, at the fruition stage, originally includes the six mundane dharma-realms with their own natures."[14]

Since this passage is about the identity of tathāgatagarbha and the six sense-organs, the six objects of sense organs, and the six consciousnesses (all of which compose the six non-enlightened realms of sentient beings), it clearly provides evidence that the state of Buddha-fruition indeed includes the six lower realms and all things in the six lower realms have their own natures in tathāgatagarbha as the state of Buddha-fruition.

As for the upper realms, in the following passage Chuandeng sees that the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha realms are similarly included in the state of Buddhahood. The following passage is about the identity of tathāgatagarbha and the teachings of the Twelve

---

[13] Ibid., 399c.

[14] Ibid. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 121a.

Links of Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths.[15] The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths to the śrāvaka and the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination to the pratyekabuddhas. Thus, for Chuandeng, this is the connection that provides him with the evidence that the two realms of the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddhas are inherent in the state of Buddha fruition:

> "'It is understanding, it is ignorance, it is the end of understanding and the ending of ignorance, and so forth up to it is old age and death and the ending of old age and death. It is suffering, it is the accumulation of the causes of suffering, it is the ending of suffering and it is the path to the ending of suffering. It is wisdom and attainment.' This passage then shows that the Thus-come One, at the fruition stage, originally includes the Two Vehicle realms with their own natures."[16]

As for the bodhisattva realm, since the tathāgatagarbha is identical to the Six Perfections that are the practices of bodhisattvas, the sutra provides evidence that the bodhisattva realm is inherent in the stage of Buddha fruition.

> "'It is dāna (giving), it is śīla (following precepts), it is kṣānati (patience), it is vīrya (effort), it is dhyāna (meditation), it is prajñā (wisdom) and it is pāramitā (perfection).' This passage then shows that the Thus-come One, at the fruition stage, originally includes the bodhisattva realm with its own nature."[17]

Finally Chuandeng says this about the Buddha realm:

> "'It is Tathāgata, Arhat[18] and Samyak-saṃbuddha (lit: unsurpassed correct enlightenment, a title of a Buddha). It is the great nirvāṇa, eternity, bliss, true self and purity.' This passage shows that the Thus-come One, at the fruition stage, originally includes the Buddha realm and achieves the ultimate state.'"[19]

---

[15] Twelve Links of Dependent Origination and Four Noble Truths are the doctrines of Buddhism that clarify the causes of suffering and the subsequent way to liberation. The twelve links in the chain of existence are ignorance, conception, consciousness, name and form, the six sense organs, contact, feeling, desire, grasping, being, birth, old age, and death. Four Noble Truths are Sufferings, the Causes of Sufferings, the Cessation of sufferings, and the Path leading to the cessation of sufferings.

[16] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 399c. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 121a.

[17] Ibid.

[18] One of the ten titles of the Buddha meaning "worthy of respect."

[19] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 399c. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 121a.

Thus, because the tathāgatagarbha is identical to Buddha and nirvāṇa, the Buddha realm is inherent in the state of Buddha fruition.

The sutra originally emphasizes that the nature of all things of the mundane and the supra-mundane is tathāgatagarbha, but Chuandeng further interprets the paragraph with nature-inclusion thought seeing that all the natures of the ten realms are inherent in the state of Buddha-fruition. In other words, Buddhahood is the perfect realization of the inclusion of the ten realms. This interpretation is actually the same as his interpretation of the seven elements in that all the natures of the seven elements are included in tathāgatagarbha.

The second feature of Buddhahood is the "perfect realization of essence as Threefold Truth" (*yuan zheng san di zhi ti* 圓證三諦之體). Here, Chuandeng is using an important Tiantai term, Threefold Truth (Empty, Provisional, and Middle Way), to show that there is no difference between Threefold Truth and the inherent ten realms and that both represent Reality. Chuandeng uses the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* again to prove this view. For him, since all things of the ten different realms represent the Provisional Truth, and the cited paragraph shows the identity of Buddhahood and the ten different realms, the sutra reveals that the inherent ten realms are the Provisional Truth in nature. Furthermore, in another paragraph, the sutra also claims that tathāgatagarbha is not the six sense-organs, nor the six objects of sense organs, nor the six consciousnesses, nor the Four Noble Truths, nor the Twelve Links, nor the Six Perfections, nor nirvāṇa. Chuandeng sees that, in order to shed any attachment to the provisional ten realms, what the sutra really says is that tathāgatagarbha is *not* the ten realms, exactly demonstrating that tathāgatagarbha is the Emptiness of the ten realms, thus revealing the Empty Truth. In another paragraph,

the sutra also claims that tathāgatagarbha is neither "identical" nor "not-identical" to the ten realms, but it is simultaneously both "identical" and "not-identical" to the ten realms. Based on this statement, Chuandeng asserts that the ten realms are neither the Provisional nor the Empty but are simultaneously both the Provisional and the Empty revealing the Middle Truth. According to Zhiyi, the Threefold Truth is also identical to the Three Virtues of the Buddha. Therefore, Chuandeng understands the sutra to mean that the essence as the inherent ten realms, which a Buddha perfectly realizes, is the Threefold Truth and the Three Virtues.[20]

The third feature of Buddhahood is "perfectly raising the function of one and many" (*yuan qi yi duo zhi yong* 圓起一多之用). After indicating in the first two features that essence as the inherent ten realms is what a Buddha realizes, in the following three features, Chuandeng wants to show the wondrous functions a Buddha has. Thus, in the third feature, he demonstrates that a Buddha can freely manifest all things of the ten realms. Moreover, all the things a Buddha manifests, whether small or great, one or many, do not obstruct one another. Chuandeng declares that this function of a Buddha is demonstrated in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as well. As the Buddha says:

> "The tathāgatagarbha is itself the unique wondrous luminous enlightenment which completely illuminates the Dharma-realm. That is why, within it, the one is infinitely many and the infinitely many are one. In the small appears the great just as in the great appears the small. On the tip of a fine hair appear the lands of the Treasure Kings (a title of a Buddha). Sitting within a particle of dust, I turn the great Dharma Wheel."[21]

Chuandeng points out that a Buddha's realization is this: any one thing in the ten realms, whether it is a particle of dust of the circumstantial reward, a hair of the direct reward, a

---

[20] Chuandneg, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 399c-400a. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 121a.

[21] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 400a. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 121a.

material form, or a mental thought, is no other than the entirety of Suchness, i.e., the entire universe. Chuandeng calls this realization "the perfect realization in accord with nature" (*chen xing yuan zheng* 稱性圓證). When a pure thing is manifested by Suchness following pure conditions, it manifests the entirety of Suchness. He calls this manifestation "the perfect manifestation in accord with nature" (*chen xing yuan xian* 稱性圓現). Therefore, the entire universe is either one thing or the infinite many. The one is no other than that which contains the infinite things. The infinite things are also no other than that which can appear in one thing. A fine hair and the lands of a Buddha are included in and unobstructed from each other. The one and the many are unhindered. Thereupon, the state a Buddha attains can simultaneously manifest the ten realms without mutually obstructing each other. In Chuandeng's view, the relationship between the one and the many is exactly as described by the ten metaphors. That is why he says "therefore, to reveal Suchness as profound enlightenment as illuminating nature as one's original home (*ben di feng guang* 本地風光, a Chan term to describe the enlightened mind) is nothing special at all."[22]

The fourth feature of Buddhahood is "perfectly raising the function of the ten realms" (*yuan qi shi jie zhi yong* 圓起十界之用). Since a Buddha can perfectly manifest the ten realms, he can also manifest each realm respectively according to the need of an individual. To demonstrate the particular use of each realm, Chuandeng cites from the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* the story about the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara who manifested thirty-two different forms to save sentient beings according to their needs. The sutra says that Avalokiteśvara attained Buddhahood by the practice of "the interpenetration by

[22] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 400a.

means of ear-organ" and obtained two supreme powers. As Avalokiteśvara says in the sutra:

> "First, my mind merged with the fundamental, wondrous, enlightened mind of all Buddhas in the ten directions above, and my power of compassion became the same as theirs. Second, my mind merged with all beings of the six destinies in the ten directions below such that I felt their sorrows and their prayerful yearnings as my own."[23]

Chuandeng holds that since a Buddha can unite with all Buddhas and all sentient beings, the sutra proves that a Buddha is in the state of perfectly realizing the ten realms as essence. Accordingly, a Buddha can manifest any realm.

To demonstrate that a Buddha can manifest any realm, Chuandeng further quotes the entire passage about the story of Avalokiteśvara's ability "to enter all lands in the appearances of thirty-two transformation bodies that respond to the needs of sentient beings."[24] He points out that this passage shows that the thirty-two transformation bodies manifested by Avalokiteśvara range throughout the ten realms. Because in the sutra, to respond to the particular need of sentient beings, Avalokiteśvara manifests the different bodies of the ten realms from the Buddha, bodhisattva, god, arhat, and human realms down to the three evil realms. These manifestations actually are the particular functions used to respond to the needs of each realm. Chuandeng emphasizes that "there is no function that does not have its own essence, and there is no essence that does not have its own function."[25] Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara can manifest the ten different realms because his nature already possesses the ten realms. Similarly, were it not that the natures of all the ten realms are also included in the causal mind of sentient beings, then what a

---

[23] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 400a. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 128b.

[24] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 400a-c. See also the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 128b-129a.

[25] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 400c.

Buddha manifests at the fruition stage would be conjured out of nothing. He thus asserts that when "using the cause to examine the effect and using the effect to examine the cause, the principle of nature-inclusion is clearly evident."[26]

The fifth feature of Buddhahood is the "complete realization of all the wondrous functions at the fruition stage" (*zheng cheng guo di miao yong zhi shi* 證成果地妙用之事). This is the feature in which Chuandeng introduces and demonstrates the enigmatic function of the "Dharma-gate of inherent evil." For the first four features, Chuandeng relies on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to prove that the Buddha uses the inherent function of the ten realms. For the fifth feature, however, he quotes from a great number of stories from different scriptures and categorizes the stories into "Four Identities" as taken from the idea of the "Six Identities" mentioned in chapter three.

In the beginning of this sixth gate, Chuandeng quotes Zhili's theory of "the dung beetle of six identities" (*Liu ji jie qiang* 六即蛣蜣) to show that Buddhahood includes the ultimate status of the ten realms and that in the state of Buddhahood a Buddha can manifest in any of the ten realms. As Chuandeng says,

> "Honorable Siming (Zhili) says, 'Moreover, you should know the meaning of the Six Identities is not exclusive to Buddhas. All the provisional and the true, the three vehicles, human and god realms, even down to the dung beetle, and the hell realm as well as form and mind must be fully understood, from the beginning to the end, through the Six Identities. Thus, there is the so-called 'dung beetle in principle', 'dung beetle in name' and even up to 'dung beetle in ultimate.' Regarding the ten realms, they are all '[identity in] principle-nature' and no other than the entire Dharma-realm. Everything [in nature] cannot change. Therefore, starting from '[identity in] name,' all stages reveal not only the Buddha realm but also the other nine realms. As for the fruit stage, all the ten realms are 'ultimate [identity].'"[27]

---

[26] Ibid., X57: 400c-401a.

[27] Ibid., X57: 399b. See also Zhili, *Guan wu liang shou fo jing shu miao zong chao* 觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔, T37: 200a.

For Zhili, since Buddha-nature contains the ten realms, the meaning of the Six Identities is not only to reveal the Buddha realm as Reality but also to reveal all the ten realms as Reality. In the first stage of the Six Identities, the mind of a sentient being is entirely deluded and non-enlightened and does not know it has all the ten realms inherent in its mind-nature (Buddha-nature); and for Zhili, at this stage, the ten realms are "identity in principle." When a sentient being hears of Buddha-nature, the sentient being is "identity in name" and all the ten realms inherent in its nature are "identity in name" as well. Likewise, in the other stages, the inherent ten realms are "identity in contemplation," "identity in resemblance," "identity in partial realization," and "ultimate identity." That is, when one becomes an actual Buddha, all the ten realms become "ultimate identity." Therefore, all things of the ten realms, from the Buddha realm down to the hell realm, have the gradations of the Six Identities. So, for Zhili, even the lowly dung beetle has six identities: dung beetle in principle, dung beetle in name, dung beetle in contemplation, dung beetle in resemblance, and ultimate dung beetle. In other words, when one achieves Buddhahood, not only the Buddha realm but also the other inherent nine realms, including the dung beetle, are ultimate Reality. Accordingly, Buddhahood includes the ultimate status of the ten realms. For Chuandeng, this indicates that a Buddha can employ the form of an "ultimate dung beetle" to help and liberate sentient beings because the Buddha has an inherent function to manifest evil things. This is the fundamental meaning of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil that Chuandeng demonstrates as the fifth feature of Buddhahood.

Chuandeng classifies the functions of the ten realms into two groups, the Dharma-gate of inherent good and the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Chuandeng explains

"Dharma" as "rule" and "gate" as "the doorway for going in and going out." In terms of Buddhas, inherent good and inherent evil are the rules of the method a Buddha employs to liberate sentient beings. At the same time, inherent good and inherent evil are the two doorways by which a Buddha goes out to liberate sentient beings and by which sentient beings go in to become Buddhas. As Chuandeng says, "All Buddhas come out through these two doorways to benefit sentient beings, and all sentient beings enter these two doorways to become Buddhas."[28] For this reason, these two Dharma-gates are the wondrous functions with which Buddhas edify sentient beings.

However, Chuandeng points out that the two Dharma-gates function differently when a Buddha uses them. He says, "[The Dharma-gate of] inherent good is the conventional way, while [the Dharma-gate of] inherent evil is the unconventional way."[29] For Chuandeng, the Dharma-gate of inherent good is the conventional way by which the Buddha, through Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna teachings, edifies sentient beings; therefore, there is no need to explain them. But, if the sentient beings could not be transformed by the conventional way, the Buddha cannot but use an unconventional way: the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. For Chuandeng, this unconventional way goes "beyond [the understanding of] moral conventions and is even extremely horrifying"[30] for ordinary people. Thus, he cites a great number of stories from scriptures to prove the existence of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil and demonstrates that the evil way is actually not evil but is the wondrous function of the Buddha's power of compassion.

Based on the Six Identities and Zhili's theory of the dung beetle, Chuandeng groups

---

[28] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 401a.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

the selected stories into four identities, "the ultimate Dharma-gate of inherent evil" (*jiu jing xing e fa men* 究竟性惡法門), "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in partial realization" (*fen zhen xing e fa men* 分真性惡法門), "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in resemblance" (*xiang si xing e fa men* 相似性惡法門), and "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in contemplation" *(guan xing xing e fa men* 觀行性惡法門).[31] According to Zhili's dung beetle theory, when one achieves a certain stage in the Six Identities, the inherent ten realms are at the same stage. Consequently, for Chuandeng, the method of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil that is employed to benefit sentient beings corresponds to the respective stage that one achieves. In other words, Buddha uses the method of "the ultimate Dharma-gate of inherent evil," bodhisattvas use "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in partial realization," those who are of the identity in resemblance can perform "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in resemblance," and those who are of the identity in contemplation can exercise "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in contemplation." Chuandeng leaves out the first two Identities, "identity in name" and "identity in principle," because the cultivators of both stages have not yet begun the contemplation of principle.

First, Chuandeng cites six stories to demonstrate "the ultimate Dharma-gate of inherent evil in ultimate" as the method used by Buddhas while arguing that there are many more stories about this stage in scriptures. They are: the story from *the Sutra of Causality in the Past and Present* (*Guo qu xian zai yin guo jing* 過去現在因果經) in which the Buddha subdued demons right before his enlightenment; the story from the *Buddha-dhyāna Samādhi-sāgara Sūtra* (*Guan fo san mei jing* 觀佛三昧經) in which the

[31] Ibid.

Buddha manifested as several young men to have sex with a prostitute to help her become enlightened. And, the four stories from the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* in which the Buddha manifested as a powerful ghost to frighten and convert an unruly ghost; the Buddha appeared as a lion to terrify elephants in order to convert them; the Buddha, as a king in his previous life, killed a Brāhman to help him be reborn to study Buddhism; and the story of the Buddha killing a man in order to help him be reborn into the god realm for the sake of saving five hundred merchants.[32] Chuandeng's intention for citing these stories is to show that these evil deeds are the unconventional ways the Buddha used to benefit sentient beings.

The last story Chuandeng cites is perhaps most striking. In this story, the Buddha tells how he uses killing as a skillful means to save sentient beings. In a past life, the Buddha found out that five hundred merchants who had all made the resolve to attain supreme enlightenment were going out to sea in search of treasure. The Buddha also knew that a thief, pretending to be a merchant, would also be on the ship. This thief wanted to kill all the merchants in order to keep the treasure for himself. The Buddha, as one of the five hundred merchants, pondered how to save the merchants and keep the thief from committing a serious crime. The Buddha knew that if they did not regress in their resolve, the five hundred merchants would eventually attain enlightenment. The thief, however, would end up falling into hell and would receive immeasurable retribution if he killed all the merchants. The Buddha concluded that the only way to save the

---

[32] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 401a-403b. These six stories can be found in *Guo qu xian zai yin guo jing* 過去現在因果經, T3: 639c-640c; *Fo shuo guan fo san mei hai jing* 佛說觀佛三昧海經, T15: 685b-686a; *Nirvāṇa Sutra*, T12: 460c, 457b, 434c, 460a. The sixth story is not cited from the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* but from the *Hui shang pu sa wen da shan quan jing* 慧上菩薩問大善權經, T12:163c. It also can be found in *Mahā-ratnakūṭa-sūtra* 大寶積經, T11: 604c-605a.

merchants and the thief was to kill the thief. He reasoned that, “If I told the thief’s plot to all the merchants, they would become angry and kill the thief. Thus, they would regress and fall into hell.” “But if I alone killed the thief, I alone will receive the serious retribution. So I would rather endure immeasurable sufferings than have all the merchants killed and let the thief fall into hell.” In this way, the Buddha taught that killing the thief was a skillful means to save the merchants and the thief alike. The thief thus escaped immeasurable sufferings in hell and directly ascended to the heaven realm after being killed, and the five hundred merchants eventually became five hundred Buddhas.

It would appear unacceptable to ordinary people for the Buddha to kill a person, but, for Chuandeng, the Buddha, in fact, would employ the evil of killing to save people from suffering. As the Buddha taught in this story, the skillful means that bodhisattvas or Buddhas employ will not cause them to suffer retribution for the seeming retribution they receive is the skillful means for saving sentient beings.[33] For Chuandeng, the evil of killing and even the retribution of falling into hell are inherent in nature. Since the Buddha has perfect understanding of nature that includes all the ten realms as Reality, the Buddha has the ability to manifest from nature the killing or retribution and they remain Reality. Because of Buddhas’ compassion, they manifest themselves as doers of evil. However, because they come from Buddha’s enlightened mind which is without defiled ignorance or attachment, these evil actions can benefit all sentient beings who are ignorant of Reality equally and liberate them from suffering. Chuandeng calls these the methods of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil that the Buddha uses to save sentient beings.

Chuandeng defines the Dharma-gate of inherent evil more broadly as “obtaining

---

[33] *Hui shang pu sa wen da shan quan jing* 慧上菩薩問大善權經, T12:163b-c.

benefit from evil" (*yu e de yi* 於惡得益). He explains that in the context of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil, "evil" does not necessarily mean evil but means "unfavorable" (*bu shun* 不順). For example, in the first story in which the demons disturbed the Buddha with evil acts right before his enlightenment, the Buddha did not respond with evil. It would seem that the Buddha did not use the Dharma-gate of inherent evil toward the demons. The Buddha, however, turned the young demonic ladies who tried to seduce him into ugly old women and turned the arrows shot toward him into lotus flowers. Chuandeng holds that what the Buddha did was to turn a favorable circumstance for the demons into an unfavorable one and this is how the Buddha used "evil"—making it unfavorable to the demons. But this unfavorable situation actually benefited the demons in that the evil in the minds of the demons was reduced, thus the "evil" the Buddha used is Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Likewise, Chuandeng asserts that when sentient beings benefit from good acts, it is called the Dharma-gate of inherent good. Whether it is an evil or good act, both are the perfect wondrous functions of all Buddhas and they are manifested out of the Buddhas' perfect understanding. Since good and evil are the inherent functions of the Buddhas, sentient beings simply benefit from the different manifestations of evil or good.[34]

Chuandeng continues to demonstrate that the method of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is also used at other stages according to the level of practitioners. The next identity is "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in partial realization" as employed by bodhisattvas. He quotes the stories of five bodhisattvas from scriptures to demonstrate this method. They are the stories in which Devadatta harmed the Buddha; Vimalakīrti frightened the demon

---

[34] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 401c.

king to convert his followers; Mañjūśrī shackled the demon king to convert him; Avalokiteśvara appeared as a ghost to threaten Ānanda in order to help his practice; and, Undefiled-Deed-of-the-Demon-Realm bodhisattva (*Mo jie xing bu wu pu sa* 魔界行不汙菩薩) manifested undefiled demonic deeds and evil to convert demons.[35]

Among these stories, Chuandeng favors the story of Devadatta the most.[36] He claims that, "it is because Devadatta used the Dharma-gate of inherent evil to train and help the Buddha in many aspects so that the Buddha could perfectly complete his practice of Dharma-gate of inherent good in order to attain Buddhahood."[37] For Chuandeng, the evil deeds that Devadatta committed toward the Buddha, such as damaging the harmony of the monastic order, trying to kill the Buddha, and shedding the Buddha's blood were not really evil acts but they were simply the manifestations of Devadatta's skillful means because after falling down to hell due to these acts, Devadatta said "I stay in the Avīci hell just as a monk enters the enjoyment of the third dhyāna (meditation) heaven." The Buddha also confirmed Devadatta's statement by saying, "The bodhisattva [Devadatta] performs the great skillful means to lead and instruct sentient beings. He receives the infinite great sufferings of life and death but never feels hurt. If someone says that Devadatta is an evil man who has fallen down to hell, it is not true."[38] Chuandeng thus argues that, "In terms of Devadatta, shouldn't we say that he raised cultivated evil from the entirety of inherent evil, and then he perfectly realized inherent evil through cultivated evil?" Similarly, "the Buddha raised cultivated good from the entirety of

---

35 Ibid., 403b-11b.

36 Ibid., 404c.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 404a.

inherent good, and he perfectly realized inherent good through cultivated good."[39] Otherwise, Chuandeng argues, Devadatta would have suffered from the rounds of life and death and would not have received the prediction of attainment of Buddhahood from the Buddha, and the Buddha in the *Lotus Sutra* would not have said that, "due to the good friend, Devadatta, I achieved the Six Perfections." For Chuandeng, Devadatta and the Buddha demonstrate the Dharma-gate of inherent evil and that of inherent good respectively.[40]

For the next two identities, "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in resemblance" and "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in contemplation," Chuandeng cites eight stories from scriptures to demonstrate the two methods. Four are Indian stories in which Śāriputra manifested as various demons or ghosts to subdue and convert the six major heterodox teachers; when Maudgalyāyana transformed into a fire-spewing dragon to threaten and convert two dragon kings; when Upagupta used dead bodies to threaten demons and convert them; and the story of a young monk who ate people as a skillful means to threaten and convert many Brāhmans. The other four are Chinese stories in which Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga 迦葉摩騰 and Dharmarakṣa 竺法蘭 converted Daoists in a competition of setting fire to Buddhist and Daoist scriptures; when Tiantai thinker Huisi 慧思 used supernatural powers to subdue a Daoist; when Zhiyi defeated demons at Huading 華頂 by deep contemplation; and finally, another story about Zhiyi entering deep meditation to defeat demons and covert Guanyu 關羽 at Yuquansan 玉泉山.[41]

---

[39] Ibid., 404c.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 411b-15b.

Although the eight stories Chuandeng quotes are meant to demonstrate that sentient beings could benefit from unconventional evil things, his point is that doing something unfavorable to others means evil, and that benefiting from evil is the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Therefore, he maintains that these scriptural stories provide the evidence that supports the methods of Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Chuandeng's analysis of "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in contemplation" is apparently missing. Yet, judging from the content of the aforementioned stories, compared to the Indian stories in which the monks already attained arhathood, the monks in the Chinese stories may refer to what Chuandeng considers to be the examples for the method of "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in contemplation." It seems that Chuandeng forgot to give the four Chinese stories the title "the Dharma-gate of inherent evil in contemplation."

At the end of this gate, Chuandeng makes a clear distinction between what it means to kill as the Dharma-gate of inherent evil versus what it means to kill as done by ordinary people. He uses ancient Chinese rulers as examples to demonstrate the difference. Tyrants like Jie 桀 and Zhou 紂 killed anyone they did not like and willfully engaged in destructive activities; for Chuandeng, these actions do not fall under the domain of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil, but rather fall under the domain of cultivated evil. The same as with the selfless rulers who acted to kill traitors and criminals to maintain a peaceful nation, for Chuandeng, these actions can only be considered cultivated good and have not reached the level of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. But, if the selfless ruler had but one selfish thought, whether the ruler conquered or was defeated does not matter, the ruler's actions at once became cultivated evil. What is interesting to point out here is that Chuandeng is classifying an action of cultivated good

or cultivated evil by the kind of thought the ruler generates behind the action itself.

Chuandeng argues that killing out of Confucian righteousness, as represented in the actions of the Chinese rulers, in fact, does **not** come out of the enlightened Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Why? Because Confucian righteousness does not have the understanding that nature (Suchness) includes the ten realms. Thus, for Chuandeng, the action of killing as a skillful means used by Buddhas to save a sentient being is never the killing that would lead to retribution. These seemingly evil deeds are manifested by the power of the Buddha's compassion for the ultimate benefit of sentient beings. The Chinese rulers, Chuandeng would argue, never knew about the Dharma-gate of inherent evil, let alone were they able to use it because they lived in a time before the Buddha and the establishment of Tiantai.[42]

The Seventh Gate: When Perfectly Practicing by Following Pure Conditions, the Entirety of Practice Rests in Nature (*Sui jing yuan xiu quan xiu zai xing* 隨淨圓修, 全修在性)

After demonstrating the method of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil as used by the Buddha, in the seventh gate Chuandeng explains what the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is for a sentient being. The practice Chuandeng develops is inspired by Zhili's maxim "contemplate cultivated evil as inherent evil" (*guan xiu e ji xing e* 觀修惡即性惡). Since sentient beings live in the nine realms, the sure path toward Buddhahood is to directly realize the cultivated evil of the nine realms as inherent evil. Thus, for Chuandeng, to "contemplate cultivated evil as inherent evil" is to "perfectly practice by following pure condition," thus "the entirety of practice rests in nature."

---

[42] Ibid., 415b-c.

Staying consistent with his main framework, Chuandeng's theory on practice is based on "essence and function" or "nature and practice." Chuandeng stresses that "the practice arises from the entirety of nature, and the entirety of practice rests in nature" (*quan xing qi xiu quan xiu zai xing* 全性起修，全修在性). This is a modified expression used by Zhili to explain Zhanran's "the entirety of nature forms practice, and the entirety of practice forms nature" (*quan xing cheng xiu quan xiu cheng xing* 全性成修，全修成性). For Chuandeng, any cultivated evil is the manifestation of the entirety of Suchness, which means, "The practice arises from the entirety of nature." Consequently, cultivated evil in its present entity is the entirety of Suchness, which means, "The entirety of practice rests in nature." In fact, it is the same as "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" and "the differentiated remain non-differentiated." Chuandeng believes that any cultivated evil of the nine realms where sentient beings reside is manifested by nature following a thought of defilement. Therefore, when cultivated evil returns to inherent evil, i.e., when any one thought returns to Suchness, a sentient being attains Buddhahood. This returning is the "perfect practice of following the pure condition" of the Buddha realm.

At first, Chuandeng points out what the "perfect practice by following pure conditions" (*Sui jing yuan xiu* 隨淨圓修) is in order for one to become a Buddha. He uses the term "perfect practice" (*yuan xiu* 圓修) in contrast to "the practice of the nine realms" (*jiu jie zhi xiu* 九界之修). For Chuandeng, because it follows defiled conditions, the "practice of the nine realms," is not in accordance with nature, whereas the "perfect practice" is in accordance with nature. The difference consists in whether or not the mind of a sentient being is deluded. A deluded mind does not understand that nature includes

all things. Following this defiled condition, the inherent evil manifests the cultivated evil of the nine realms. In other words, nature manifests "the three paths" (affliction, karma, and suffering) of sentient beings, and for this reason, the practice of the nine realms is not "the perfect practice in accord with nature" (*cheng xing yuan xiu* 稱性圓修). On the other hand, when the mind is enlightened, it realizes that nature contains all things. Following this pure condition, the inherent good then manifests the cultivated good of the Buddha realm. In other words, nature manifests the Three Virtues of a Buddha. For this reason, the practice of the Buddha realm is "the perfect practice in accordance with nature" 稱性圓修 or "perfectly practice by following pure conditions" 隨淨圓修.[43]

This does not mean, however, that "the practice of the nine realms" is not manifested by the entirety of Suchness. On the contrary, the cultivated evil of the nine realms remains a function of the entire nature. Chuandeng clarifies that although the practice of the nine realms is not "the perfect practice in accordance with nature," it is still in accordance with "the practice arising from the entirety of nature" 全性起修.[44] In fact, for Chuandeng, the perfect practice of the Buddha realm and the practice of the nine realms are the manifestations of inherent good and inherent evil respectively. It is also the manifestations of the entire nature. It does not matter whether the mind is deluded or enlightened, any one thing of the cultivated good or cultivated evil is the function of the entire nature. That is, "the practice arises from the entirety of nature." Thus, any one thing in its present entity can return to its nature, inherent good or inherent evil, i.e., return to the entirety of nature. This means that "the entirety of practice rests in nature"

---

[43] Ibid., X57: 415c-416a.

[44] Ibid., X57: 415c.

全修在性. For Chuandeng, this is the key to the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. In other words, it is to fulfill the identity of nature (essence) and practice (function), just as he discussed in the ten metaphors.[45] Therefore, Chuandeng calls the method of "contemplate cultivated evil as inherent evil" the "perfect practice of following pure condition."

As said before, Chuandeng's theory on the method of "contemplate cultivated evil as inherent evil" is derived from Zhili. Originally, Zhiyi focused the Dharma-gate of inherent evil on the mutual inclusion of the good and the evil instead of on the relationship of essence and function. Zhiyi explained the Dharma-gate of inherent evil by the idea that "the three paths of sentient beings are the Three Virtues of Buddhas" as discussed in chapter three. It is Zhanran who used the relationship of essence and function to emphasize that "the entire nature forms practice, and the entire practice forms nature" as discussed in chapter four. Although Zhanran incorporated the idea of Suchness that can follow conditions and the relationship of essence and function into Tiantai thought, he still upheld the Tiantai concept of mutual inclusion. Consequently, Zhili developed Zhanran's idea and focused on the identity (*ji* 即) of essence (nature) and function (practice). Zhili showed that the key idea is that any cultivated evil in its present entity is identical to Suchness. As Zhili said:

> "Practice (function) means what is cultivated and what is formed. That is, the Three Thousands that are transformed and formed. Nature (essence) means what originally exists and never changes. It means the Three Thousands inherently included in principle. Now, it shows that since "practice arises from the entirety of nature," all activities are uncreated. Since "the entirety of practice rests in nature," one single thought completes the perfection [of nature]. Thereby, outside practice there is no nature. Outside nature there is no practice."[46]

---

[45] Ibid., 416a.

[46] Zhili, *Shi bu er men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔, T46: 713a.

For Zhili, no cultivated evil is ever created and it is no other than nature. Since every one thing is identical to nature, any one single thought is therefore also nature. Consequently, in order to become a Buddha, sentient beings do not need to cut off the cultivated evil of the nine realms. They just need to return the cultivated evil to the inherent evil. In terms of causal mind, it is to realize that one defiled thought is Buddha-nature as Suchness that includes the ten realms. This is the explanation for Zhili's maxim, "contemplate cultivated evil as inherent evil" and his idea of "the deluded mind can become a Buddha" as discussed in chapter four.

One of the reasons why Chuandeng is different from his predecessors is that he uses the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to interpret the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. For Chuandeng, the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is universally taught in Mahāyāna scriptures. In this gate, he further argues that most practices advocated in Mahāyāna scriptures are the method of the "contemplation of cultivated evil as inherent evil" while just a few are that of "contemplation of cultivated good as inherent good." He cites several examples from the Mahāyāna scriptures as evidence for the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. As he says:

> "The *Vimalakīrti Sutra* teaches that 'Saṁsāra is nirvāṇa, and Affliction is bodhi.' It also says, 'Sexual desire, anger and ignorance are no other than liberation.' It also says, 'The sixty-two false views are the seeds of the Thus-come One.' It also says, 'The six sense-organs are identical to pure land.' It also says, 'Teaching liberation without discarding words.' The *Sarva-dharmāpravtti-nirdeśa* (*Wu xing jing* 無行經) says, 'Desire is the Way. Anger and ignorance are [the Way] as well. In these three things, all the teachings of the Buddha are included.'[47] All of the above teach cultivators only that there is no need to turn around (abandon cultivated evil and turn to cultivated good) in order to realize cultivated evil in its present entity as inherent evil."[48]

---

[47] The *Sarva-dharmāpravtti-nirdeśa* 諸法無行經, T15: 759c.

[48] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 416a.

For Chuandeng, most Mahāyāna scriptures advocate that directly seeing through the cultivated evil as inherent evil is the way to become a Buddha. By using the Dharma-gate of inherent evil, there is no need for sentient beings to turn cultivated evil into cultivated good.

Selecting one of the most popular sutras of his time, Chuandeng uses the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to prove the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. As he says:

> "The teachings of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* and the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* are the highest immediate Round Teaching. These two scriptures which teach people nothing but to realize that inherent evil is identical to cultivated evil. Although the written words of the two scriptures do not mention it directly, the sutras' meanings are entirely in agreement with it. Now, I will only mention the main point of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, but I am going to widely cite the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* as proof."[49]

Clearly, Chuandeng's attitude is to make the sutra relevant to nature-inclusion thought. Chuandeng proves his theory by connecting the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil with the seven methods by means of the seven elements as taught in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. These seven methods are part of the twenty-five methods by which one can reach the state of interpenetration (*yuan tong* 圓通) of Buddhahood.[50] The sutra says that one can realize Suchness through any method of the twenty-five elements. These elements are the six sense-organs, the six objects of the six sense-organs, the six consciousnesses, and the seven elements. In the sutra, twenty-five enlightened sages discuss how they reached enlightenment by practicing according to the corresponding method of each element. Chuandeng believes that all of the twenty-five methods are exactly the practice of the contemplation of cultivated evil as inherent evil. He chooses, however, the methods of the

---

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., 416b.

seven elements to demonstrate the Dharma-gate of inherent evil since he believes that the seven elements represent all things in the ten realms.

In the sutra, the seven methods are about contemplating the nature of the seven elements as tathāgatagarbha. For Chuandeng, since sentient beings live in the nine realms, the seven elements that construct the direct and circumstantial rewards of the nine realms are cultivated evil. He reinterprets that the seven methods are aimed at returning the cultivated evil formed by the seven elements to the inherent evil of the seven elements. Under his reinterpretation, these seven methods become the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.

In the explanation of the method of "the interpenetration by means of earth element," the sutra says that in a past life, the Earth-holding Bodhisattva (*Chidi pu sa* 持地菩薩) filled and leveled all holes in the ground in order to practice the interpenetration by means of earth element. The bodhisattva contemplated that "while leveling the mental ground, all the universal grounds are even."[51] He thus understood that all the earths of both the direct and circumstantial rewards are not different but are identical to tathāgatagarbha. With this realization, he achieved the interpenetration by this earth method.

Chuandeng asserts that the bodhisattva's practice of leveling the mental ground is the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. He proposes that "leveling the ground" (*ping da di* 平大地) and "leveling the mental ground" (*ping xin di* 平心地) are two different practices. The method of "leveling the ground" does not return the cultivated phenomena to nature while that of "leveling the mental ground" does. As Chuandeng says:

---

[51] Ibid., 416c-17a.

> "This is the true emptiness that follows conditions. When leveling the ground, [by following many] single thoughts, [nature] manifests innumerable differences but never changes. When leveling the mind, all the innumerable differences return to the one-nature."[52]

Chuandeng regards the relationship of mind-nature (inherent earth) and ground (cultivated earth) to be that of essence and function. He further explains, "When leveling the ground we use the body, when leveling the mind, we use wisdom. The ground is the deluded form (earth) of 'following conditions.' The mind is the inherent form (earth)." If one practices leveling the ground without the understanding of inherent earth, then the practice is just to level the innumerable different grounds by manual labor, thus not returning the cultivated phenomena to mind-nature. Consequently, mind-nature just follows many different single thoughts to become the innumerable cultivated phenomena. And, in this way, innumerable thoughts arise in great confusion about Reality and nature becomes affliction resulting in saṁsāra. Thus, the non-differentiated becomes the differentiated.

Thus, for Chuandeng, the Earth-holding Bodhisattva's practice is about leveling the mind. Chuandeng holds that the Earth-holding Bodhisattva returns the differentiated innumerable grounds to the non-differentiated inherent earth. In other words, the bodhisattva returns the many single thoughts to mind-nature and this cultivated activity becomes the bodhi mind and nirvāṇa. Because the innumerable grounds are identical to mind-nature, all the grounds of the universe are non-differentiated and this is "the differentiated remains non-differentiated." Chuandeng asserts that what the Earth-holding Bodhisattva contemplates is "the form (earth) of cultivated evil" (*xiu e zhi se* 修惡之色), i.e., the forms (earths) of the direct and circumstantial rewards of the nine realms. The

---

[52] Ibid., 417a.

differentiated forms (earths) of cultivated evil are actually manifested by "the form (earth) of inherent evil" (*xing e zhi se* 性惡之色),[53] which is identical to the entirety of Suchness. This means that "practice arises from the entirety of nature" 全性起修. Were it not so, Chuandeng claims, "the forms of cultivated evil" of the nine realms could not return to "the form of inherent evil." This means that "the entirety of practice rests in nature" 全修在性. By this interpretation, Chuandeng affirms that the Earth-holding Bodhisattva understands the idea that practice is identical to nature and that he "contemplates the cultivated evil as inherent evil" to attain the state of interpenetration. As Chuandeng says:

> "[Earth-holding Bodhisattva] can realize the form of cultivated evil as the form of inherent evil. When the interpenetration of inherent evil with everything is understood, there is no dharma it cannot reach. Thus it spontaneously reaches the inherent good of the Buddha realm. Therefore, he was able to eliminate his dust [of ignorance], perfect his wisdom and accomplish the unsurpassed way."[54]

In this way, Chuandeng affirms that the practice of the interpenetration by means of earth element in the sutra exemplifies the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.

Chuandeng uses the same pattern to explain the other six elements. In the sutra, Ucchuṣma (*wu chu se mo* 烏芻瑟摩) spoke about how in his past life he practiced the interpenetration by means of fire element and thereby reached enlightenment. Ucchuṣma had excessive greed and sexual desire and his retribution would have been a raging mass of fire. He then contemplated the heat flowing in his body and mind without obstruction. He focused on his spiritual light (*shen guang* 神光, wisdom) and used it to turn the thoughts of excessive lust into the fire of wisdom. Thus, he attained the Flame Samādhi

---

[53] Ibid., 417a.

[54] Ibid.

(*huo guang san mei* 火光三昧) and used it to liberate sentient beings.

Chuandeng interprets the fire method this way: he takes the contemplation of "the fire of cultivated evil" (*xiu e zhi huo* 修惡之火) as "the fire of inherent evil" (*xing e zhi huo* 性惡之火).[55] He asserts that the heat currents inside the body are the fire of cultivated evil which appeared by the fire of inherent evil following defiled thoughts. Chuandeng reiterates, as discussed in the sutra, what the fire of inherent evil is: "In the tathāgatagarbha, the nature of fire is true emptiness 性火真空, and the nature of emptiness is true fire 性空真火. It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm." The fire of inherent evil manifests as the fire of cultivated evil because the mind of the sentient being is deluded and defiled. Therefore, Suchness follows the defiled conditions and turns the Three Virtues of the Buddha realm into the three paths of sentient beings, i.e., the nine realms. Chuandeng thus claims that Ucchuṣma's contemplation of heat in the body and lustful thoughts in the mind is the contemplation of the fire of cultivated evil and his transformation of the heat and lustful thoughts into the fire of wisdom is the return of the fire of cultivated evil to the fire of inherent evil. In other words, the fire of cultivated evil is identical to the fire of inherent evil, and one lustful thought is no different from Buddha-nature. By this interpretation, Chuandeng affirms that Ucchuṣma "contemplates the cultivated evil as inherent evil" to attain the state of interpenetration. As Chuandeng says:

> "[Ucchuṣma] transforms the fire of cultivated evil into the fire of inherent evil. When the interpenetration of inherent evil with everything is understood, there is no dharma it cannot reach, thus it spontaneously reaches the inherent good of the Buddha realm."

---

[55] Ibid., 416c.

With this, Chuandeng asserts that Ucchuṣma's practice of the interpenetration by means of the fire element is the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[56]

In the sutra, it was the Pure Youth Moonlight (*yue guang tong zi* 月光童子) who practiced the interpenetration by the method of the water element. The sutra says that he contemplated the nature of different kinds of water, such as saliva, semen, blood, urine, and excrement throughout his body as not different from the nature of water in the world outside his body. He then realized that his nature and the nature of water in the ten directions were identical with true emptiness. Thereby, he accomplished the perfection of the mind.

Chuandeng interprets this method as the contemplation of "the water of cultivated evil" (*xiu e zhi shui* 修惡之水) as "the water of the inherent evil" (*xing e zhi shui* 性惡之水). He points out that all the different waters inside the body are the water of cultivated evil. To contemplate the nature of the water inside to be no different from the nature of the water outside is to return the differentiated waters of cultivated evil to the non-differentiated water of inherent evil. As mentioned before, Chuandeng sees inherent water expressed in the sutra: "the nature of water is true emptiness (*xing shui zhen kong* 性水真空), and the nature of emptiness is true water (*xing kong zhen shui* 性空真水). It is originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm." For him, the water of inherent evil can follow conditions to manifest the water of cultivated evil but the water of inherent evil does not change. Therefore, in the Pure Youth's understanding that "the nature of water was identical with the True Emptiness without any duality and difference," Chuandeng sees the realization of "the water of inherent evil." Thus the

[56] Ibid., 416b-c.

water of cultivated evil returns to the water of inherent evil. And, for Chuandeng, the Pure Youth Moonlight's practice by means of the water element is the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[57]

In the sutra, it was the Dharma-Prince Lapis Lazuli's Light (*liu li guang fa wang zi* 琉璃光法王子) who practiced the method of the wind element. The sutra says that wind in fact means movement: "The arising of this world and the bodies of sentient beings are propelled by deluded conditions as wind power." The Dharma-Prince Lapis Lazuli's Light thus "contemplated the formation of the world, the passing of time, the movement and stillness of the body, and the arising of thoughts in the mind, and contemplated that all these movements are non-dual and non-differentiated." Thereby, he was awakened to the enlightened mind. Chuandeng then interprets that "the arising of the world and the bodies of the sentient beings propelled by deluded condition as wind power" means the different winds of the direct reward and circumstantial rewards, i.e., the "wind of cultivated evil" (*xiu e zhi feng* 修惡之風) of the nine realms. All the different movements as winds are manifested by the wind of inherent evil as the entirety of Suchness. This means that "practice arises from the entirety of nature" 全性起修. The contemplation of all the different movements in the world and of the sentient beings as non-dual and non-differentiated is to return the differentiated winds of cultivated evil to the non-differentiated wind of inherent evil. That is what the title of this gate says, "the entirety of practice rests in nature" 全修在性. For Chuandeng, this also refers to what the sutra says about inherent wind: "the nature of wind is true emptiness 性風真空, and the nature of emptiness is true wind 性空真風. It is originally pure and pervades

[57] Ibid., 417b-c.

everywhere in the Dharma-realm." Thus, the Dharma-Prince Lapis Lazuli's Light's practice is the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[58]

It was Treasury of Empty Space Bodhisattva (*xu kong zang pu sa* 虛空藏菩薩) who practiced the method of empty space element to reach the state of interpenetration. He contemplated empty space as boundless and also contemplated that all the four material elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, which form the body and the lands, are all non-dual with empty space having nothing on which to rely. Thereby, he obtained the boundless body like empty space and reached the perfect realization. Thereupon, in his mind there appears a great perfect mirror. All the countless lands of the universe could come into the mirror without hindrance and his body could enter the countless lands to do the Buddha's work on a wide scale. In other words, the body and the lands do not obstruct with each other and the body and the lands are identical.

Chuandeng then interprets this empty space method as the contemplation of the empty space of cultivated evil as the empty space of inherent evil. In the sutra, empty space is also called "dim emptiness" (*hui mei zhi kong* 晦昧之空) because the sutra claims that empty space which is false Emptiness was created by deluded thoughts.[59] For Chuandeng, dim emptiness is the empty space of cultivated evil (*xiu e hui mei zhi kong* 修惡晦昧之空). The bodhisattva's boundless body is the result of his contemplation on the empty space of cultivated evil as the true emptiness of the empty space of inherent evil (*xing e zhi zhen kong* 性惡之真空). Moreover, the empty space of inherent evil is no different from the four elements of inherent evil as Suchness. In other words, the four

---

[58] Ibid., 417c-18a.

[59] The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, T19: 110c.

elements and the empty space element are all boundless and identical to Suchness. Therefore, the body and lands formed by the four elements are identical to boundless empty space. Thus, the direct reward of body and the circumstantial rewards of lands are non-dual, one and many are unobstructed, and the large and the small are non-obstructed within each other. Thus, the mind and the direct and circumstantial rewards of ten realms are interpenetrated because "the practice arises from the entire nature, the entirety of practice rests in nature." Thus, the Treasury of Empty Space Bodhisattva's practice is the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[60]

Maitreya bodhisattva practiced the method of consciousness element to reach the state of interpenetration. He practiced the Consciousness-only Concentration in a past life. At that time, he was greedy for worldly fame so he contemplated that all things were the delusions manifested by his own mind. Realizing this, he completely stopped seeking for worldly fame, thus accomplishing the Unsurpassed Consciousness Samādhi. Chuandeng describes Maitreya's practice to be the contemplation of consciousness of cultivated evil as the consciousness of inherent evil. From among the nine consciousnesses of mind[61], Chuandeng holds that unchanging Suchness can manifest the ninth purified-consciousness of the Buddha (amala-vijñāna) when it is following the pure conditions of the Buddha realm. When it follows the defiled conditions of the nine realms, it manifests the three defiled consciousnesses of the nine realms, the sixth mind-consciousness (mano-vijñāna), the seventh ego-consciousness (mānas-vijñāna), and the eighth storehouse-consciousness (ālāya-vijñāna). (Since the first five consciousnesses

---

60 Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 418a-b.

61 The nine consciousnesses are the consciousnesses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, mānas (ego-consciousness), ālāya (store-consciousness), and amala (purified or Buddha-consciousness).

of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body appear only with the arising of the sixth mind-consciousness, Chuandeng leaves them out.) Thus, the non-differentiated Suchness can become the differentiated consciousnesses. Chuandeng holds that the sixth, seventh, and eighth consciousnesses are the three consciousnesses of cultivated evil (*xiu e zhi san shi* 修惡之三識). He claims that Maitreya's practice of the Consciousness-only Concentration is to contemplate the three consciousnesses of cultivated evil as the consciousness of inherent evil; that is, as the ninth purified-consciousness. When Maitreya reached the Unsurpassed Consciousness Samādhi, he then ceased his defiled thought of seeking worldly fame and returned the three consciousnesses to unchanging Suchness. This means that the differentiated remain non-differentiated. In other words, since "practice arises from the entirety of nature," then "the entirety of practice rests in nature." Thus, Maitreya's practice is also the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[62]

It was the Dharma-Prince Great Strength (*Dashizhi fa wang zi* 大勢至法王子) who practiced the method of the sense-organ element (as explained in chapter seven, it is represented by the seeing element). Thus, by using the mind that contemplates the Buddha (*nian fo xin* 念佛心), the Dharma-Prince Great Strength completely concentrated on and gathered in the six sense-organs (*du she liu gen* 都攝六根) to continuously maintain a pure contemplation on the Buddha and, thereby, he attained the Buddha-contemplation Samādhi (*nian fo san mei* 念佛三昧).

For Chuandeng, this is the practice of contemplating the six sense-organs of cultivated evil as the six sense-organs of inherent evil. He takes the seeing function of the eye-organ as an example to explain this practice. To contemplate Buddha by means of

[62] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 418b-c.

seeing is to return the seeing of cultivated evil to the seeing of inherent evil. In his understanding, to contemplate the Buddha is to contemplate the three bodies of the Buddha: the Dharma-body, the Reward Body, and the Transformation Body. He also says that there are three ways of Buddha-contemplation: contemplating one's own mind-nature as the three bodies of the Buddha (*nian zi fo san shen* 念自佛三身); contemplating the three bodies of the other Buddhas outside oneself (*nian ta fo san shen* 念它佛三身); and simultaneously contemplating the three bodies of the Buddhas outside oneself and the three bodies of the Buddha as one's own mind-nature (*nian zi ta san shen* 念自它三身). No matter which one of the three we contemplate when using the seeing element to practice, we should *see* the three bodies of the Buddha as one's own mind-nature (*zi fo san shen* 自佛三身) and the three bodies of the Buddhas outside oneself (*ta fo san shen* 它佛三身) are inherent in nature, and thus both are exactly identical to each other and no different from nature. Therefore, when one returns the seeing of cultivated evil to the seeing of inherent evil, the inherent seeing is no different from both kinds of three bodies. At this moment, the inherent seeing can simultaneously see both kinds of three bodies in nature. Moreover, inherent seeing and both kinds of three bodies are no different from one another. For Chuandeng, in this way, the Dharma-Prince Great Strength returned the seeing of cultivated evil to the seeing of inherent evil and thus simultaneously saw both kinds of three bodies and this seeing of inherent evil is his mind that is contemplating the Buddha 念佛心. Chuandeng argues that this is how the Dharma-Prince Great Strength gathered in the eye-organ to contemplate the Buddha. He also holds that the Dharma-Prince Great Strength gathered in the other five sense-organs, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind to contemplate the Buddha in the same way. That is, he contemplated the

six sense-organs of cultivated evil as that of inherent evil through which he gathered in the six organs and then attained the Samādhi of Buddha-contemplation, and this practice is the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[63]

Chuandeng further argues that, in the same way, not only the six organs but also the six objects of the six organs and the six consciousnesses can be returned to their natures which are identical to Buddha's three bodies. Thus, with this understanding, in contemplation, a tree can be the Buddha's body and a particle of dust can be the Pure Land of the Buddha. In other words, every one thing, when returning to its nature, can be the Buddha's body of direct reward as well as the Buddha's Pure Land of circumstantial reward.[64] This is all because "practice arises from the entirety of nature, and the entirety of practice rests in nature."

The Dharma-Prince Great Strength's practice by means of sense-organ is usually called "the interpenetration through Buddha-contemplation" (*nianfo yuan tong* 念佛圓通) and this method is highly regarded by the Pure Land school. Chuandeng's reinterpretation shows that nature-inclusion thought can serve as the unifying idea between the Pure Land and Tiantai teachings. His harmonizing efforts are also seen in *On the Rebirth as Non-birth in the Pure Land*, upon which one of his contemporaries comments, "The great master Youxi (Chuandeng) used the doctrine of the Round Teaching of nature-inclusion thought to expound the Pure Land teaching, which he wrote in the work entitled *On the Rebirth as Non-birth*."[65] Like his effort to harmonize Chan with Tiantai, which we saw

---

[63] Ibid., 419a-b.

[64] Ibid., 419b.

[65] Zhenming 真銘, "Postscript" (*Ba yu* 跋語), *Jingtu sheng wusheng lun qin wen ji* 淨土生無生論親聞記 (*Commentary On the Rebirth as Non-birth in the Pure Land*), X61: 871.

before, this is a very significant feature of his thought.

For Chuandeng, the practices of the seven elements are the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. While Chuandeng follows Zhili to stress the method of "contemplate the cultivated evil as inherent evil" as the best way to become a Buddha, he further follows Huaize to emphasize that inherent good is the ultimate goal of the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. In the following, he quotes Huaize's idea to be the general principle of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil:

> "When the interpenetration of inherent evil with everything is understood, there is no dharma it cannot reach. Thus, it spontaneously reaches the inherent good of the Buddha realm."[66]

For Chuandeng, both inherent evil and inherent good exist in Suchness respectively and mutually interpenetrate each other, and both are identical to and no different from Buddha-nature. Both Huaize and Chuandeng, however, emphasize that one realizes cultivated evil in its present entity as inherent evil first, and through the mutual inclusion relationship of inherent evil and inherent good one can reach the inherent good of Buddhahood. This is different from Zhili who emphasized Reality as "there has never been a time when the pure essence was undefiled."[67] Chuandeng stresses that the final goal is to reach the inherent good inside inherent evil and both inherent good and inherent evil are the purity of Suchness. It is fair to say that Chuandeng's attention on the inherent good as the final goal of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is his way of responding to the stress on doing good in the Ming period.

Chuandeng uses the Dharma-gate of inherent evil to reinterpret the practices of the

---

[66] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, 416a.

[67] Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 232.

Śūraṃgama Sūtra. At the same time, he also reinterprets the Dharma-gate of inherent evil by using the doctrine of the sutra. In the sutra, the twenty-five methods of interpenetration are used to observe that the nature of all things is the pure mind as tathāgatagarbha. The sutra does not directly talk about the "contemplation of cultivated evil as inherent evil." Chuandeng, however, reinterprets the natures of the seven elements as their own respective natures inherent in Suchness and sees the seven practices as the method used to return the seven elements of the cultivated evil to the seven elements of the inherent evil. By the same token, he argues, "In the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, the twenty-five sages talk about their respective [methods of] interpenetration, all [these methods] are no other than [contemplating] the cultivated evil in its entity as identical to the inherent evil."[68] In doing so, he makes the teachings of the sutra relevant to the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. In addition, tathāgatagarbha is described in the sutra as "originally pure and pervades everywhere in the Dharma-realm," a description also used by Chuandeng to demonstrate that it is a feature of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil that leads one to return to inherent good, the mind of purity. We can see that, for Chuandeng, the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is the most authoritative scripture supporting the theory of the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil and nature-inclusion thought.

The Eighth Gate: Following Pure Conditions to Reach Perfect Realization, Lifting One Thing and All Are Gathered within (*Sui jing yuan zheng ju yi quan shou* 隨淨圓證，舉一全收)

While the previous gate is about how the Dharma-gate of inherent evil can be practiced, this gate is about the result of the practice. Chuandeng demonstrates that no

[68] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 416b.

matter what single cultivated thing of any realm one contemplates on, the ultimate state one will reach is the realization that the ten realms are inherently included in that single thing.

"Lifting one thing and all are gathered within" (*ju yi quan shou* 舉一全收) is a term Chuandeng borrows from Zhili to describe Zhiyi's idea of Reality which says that the Three Thousand Worlds are inherent in nature. In order to differentiate from the Shanwai sect's nature-origination position that Suchness is separate from the other nine realms, Zhili used "lifting one thing and all are gathered within" to emphasize the Tiantai idea that every single thing is not separate from all things and indeed contains all things in it. Whether direct or circumstantial rewards, material or mental elements, sentient beings or Buddhas, all are mutually included in and interpenetrated with one another. As Zhili said, "Nature includes the Three Thousands. Although there are [the differentiated] direct and circumstantial rewards, form and mental elements and self and others, all things are completely interpenetrated. Lift one thing and all are gathered within."[69]

Chuandeng borrows Zhili's expression but he creatively explains it by the practices of the seven elements, asserting that to contemplate any element of cultivated evil as inherent evil is to simultaneously realize all the inherent natures of the seven elements at once. He uses the example of the water element in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to expound on this simultaneous realization. In the sutra, water-nature is the true emptiness of tathāgatagarbha. For Chuandeng, "water-nature" means "inherent water." As discussed in chapter seven, Chuandeng also sees the sutra showing that the first four elements of inherent earth, inherent water, inherent fire, and inherent wind are no different from the

---

[69] Zhili, *Siming shi yi shu* 四明十義書, T46: 836b.

fifth element of inherent empty space (Emptiness). And inherent empty space (Emptiness) is no different from the sixth element of inherent seeing and the seventh element of inherent consciousnesses in enlightenment. In this way, Chuandeng sees that all the elements are no different from each other through the fifth element of empty space, thus making all the inherent elements no different from but identical to water-nature. As Chuandeng says:

> "When each element is perfectly realized, each nature is united with water-nature as the true emptiness [of tathāgatagarbha], without duality or difference. Doesn't this mean 'lifting one and all are gathered within?'"[70]

For this reason, Chuandeng holds that when one realizes water-nature, one will at once realize the mutual inclusion and interpenetration of the water element and the other six elements. In other words, the realization of each nature of the seven elements is the perfect realization of the seven natures of the seven elements. It is also the perfect realization of the natures of all things of the ten realms. This is "lifting one thing and all are gathered within."

Chuandeng further emphasizes that "lifting one thing and all are gathered within" means the interpenetration of inherent evil and inherent good. That is, both good and evil exist respectively in nature and are mutually included in one another. As he says:

> "The methods of the seven elements are all the contemplation of cultivated evil as inherent evil. When the interpenetration of the inherent evil with all things is understood, there is no dharma it cannot reach, and it spontaneously reaches the inherent good of the Buddha realm. Moreover, when the interpenetration of the inherent good with all things is understood, there is no evil that it does not include, and it spontaneously reaches the inherent evil of the nine realms. After those who practice in accordance with the Round Teaching accomplish the [Buddha-]fruition, all the nine realms are in ultimate."[71]

---

[70] Chuandeng, *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論, X57: 419c.

[71] Ibid.

Chuandeng points out that the realization of inherent evil is in fact the realization of inherent good. The realization of the nature of one thing is the realization of all the natures of the ten realms. When the Buddha-fruition stage is attained, the other nine realms become the ultimate state of Buddha-fruition. It is therefore in this sense that Chuandeng says that each method of the seven elements of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* points to "lifting one thing and all are gathered within," or, to put it simply, this is to realize the mutual inclusion of good and evil.

Chuandeng's Conclusions

Chuandeng concludes by affirming the status of Tiantai's nature-inclusion thought as the Round Teaching. He says that to discuss "Suchness following conditions" without the concept of nature-inclusion is not enough to determine that it is the Round Teaching. If all the differentiated things are not included in the pure mind as Suchness and are produced after Suchness follows conditions, this Suchness is changed into what it does not possess inherently. Since this nature is changed, this nature cannot be the true unchanging nature. Therefore, he states, "The teaching that Suchness is changed after following conditions is the Separate Teaching. The teaching that Suchness is not changed after following conditions is the Round Teaching." Suchness includes all the differentiated things, so when it manifests as differentiated things while following conditions, each differentiated thing still includes the entirety of Suchness. Thus, the Round Teaching is also about the identity of essence and function.[72]

Furthermore, Chuandeng emphasizes that talking about nature-inclusion without

---

[72] Ibid.

mentioning that Buddha-nature includes the ten realms could be misunderstood as Buddha-nature includes only the Buddha realm and not the other nine realms. This implies that one needs to cut off the nine realms to reach the Buddha realm making this Buddha-nature the Separate Teaching. Conversely, the truth is that the Buddha-nature of the Round Teaching contains the ten realms. Thus, the good of the Buddha realm and the evil of the nine realms are manifested by the entirety of the inherent ten realms as Buddha-nature. To understand that this Buddha-nature can be discovered in the phenomenal evil of the nine realms is fundamental for becoming a Buddha.[73]

According to Chuandeng, it is essential that the Dharma-gate of inherent evil must be pointed out when discussing nature-inclusion thought and he gives five major reasons that underline its importance:

> "First, it (inherent evil) is inherently included in the principle-essence. Second, when nature has been realized, it can manifest [any thing of] practice. Third, [when one has] the perfect realization at the fruition stage, all dharmas are no other than wondrous manifestations. Fourth, when raising the wondrous functions, these functions must be used [to help the sentient beings] in the ten realms. Fifth, the capacities of all sentient beings are different, and [the methods used to] liberate sentient beings must be in accordance with all capacities."[74]

Chuandeng discusses in detail the fifth reason as the other four have been fully elaborated upon. For Chuandeng, on the one hand, it is necessary for certain sentient beings to practice the Dharma-gate of inherent evil to enter the Buddha-Way. On the other hand, it is necessary for bodhisattvas (including Buddhas) to use the Dharma-gate of inherent evil to liberate those sentient beings whose capabilities are suitable to it.[75]

To demonstrate what the praxis of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil for bodhisattvas

---

[73] Ibid., 419c-20a.

[74] Ibid., 420a.

[75] Ibid.

and sentient beings is, Chuandeng cites from many stories in scripture. The bodhisattvas, who use the Dharma-gate of inherent evil as a tool to liberate themselves and others, achieve the realization of the inherent evil through contemplating the present entity of cultivated evil. For doctrinal proof of the practice, Chuandeng first cites from the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*:

> "Mañjūśrī asked Vimalakīrti, 'How can a bodhisattva perfectly understand the Buddha-way?' [Vimalakīrti answers:] 'if a bodhisattva can manifest …as having desire but is simultaneously free from all defilements, can manifest the deeds of anger but is not angry at sentient beings, and can manifest being ignorant but is taming the mind with wisdom. …If a bodhisattva enters the non-Way in this way, [the bodhisattva] perfectly understands and reaches the Buddha-Way."[76]

What Vimalakīrti—a manifestation of a Buddha—said is that a bodhisattva can manifest the three poisons (cultivated evil) to help people understand Reality. For Chuandeng, this proves that, "bodhisattvas use the Dharma-gate of inherent evil to liberate sentient beings and that they perfectly understand the Buddha-way." Other statements Chuandeng cites from the *Vimalakīrti Sutra,* such as "all the afflictions are the seeds of the Thus-come One," are evidence for his argument that "through the contemplation of cultivated evil as inherent evil one naturally reaches the inherent good of the Buddha realm." For Chuandeng, these statements also show that all cultivated evil are Buddha Seeds.[77]

Chuandeng points to three stories in the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* as examples for the actual bodhisattva practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil: the story of the lady Vasumitrā (*Po-xu-mi-duo* 婆須密多), that of the king Anala (*Wu-yan-zu* 無厭足), and that of the Brāhman Jayoṣmāya (*Sheng-re* 勝熱).[78] In the sutra, they are three of the fifty-three

---

[76] Ibid., 420a-b.

[77] Ibid., 420b-c.

[78] Ibid., 420c-24c.

bodhisattvas to whom the practitioner Sudhana (*san cai tong zi* 善財童子) asked for advice on how to practice the bodhisattva way in order to reach Buddhahood. They told Sudhana that they respectively used sexual desire, anger, and wrong views (three poisons) to help themselves accomplish the practice of the bodhisattva and thus also help sentient beings liberate themselves. Chuandeng's point is that the three poisons they used are cultivated evil. Through cultivated evil, they all realized the inherent evil and reached liberation and, thereby, they had the right understanding to be able to correctly use the Dharma-gate of inherent evil to liberate sentient beings as well.

This is the story of Vasumitrā who used sexual desire to liberate sentient beings: when Sudhana was on his way in search of Vasumitrā's advice on the bodhisattva practice, some people thought that he might harbor sexual desire for Vasumitrā because Vasumitrā was an extremely beautiful woman. Other people, however, knew that he was in search of her advice because he made a vow to help himself and all sentient beings to rid themselves of sexual desires and all attachments and thus they told Sudhana where Vasumitrā lived. When Sudhana saw Vasumitrā and found her a peerless beauty, he prostrated to her and asked how she practiced the bodhisattva way. Vasumitrā said, "I have already attained the bodhisattva liberation and am named 'Free-from-greed-and-desire (*li tan yu ji* 離貪欲際).' I manifest in [different] transformations according to the desires of sentient beings. … If sentient beings who are trapped by their desire to see me come to me, I teach them the Dharma. After hearing the teaching, they are freed from greed and desire and thus attain the Samādhi of the Unattached State." She further said that if sentient beings wanted to talk to her or hold her hands or look at her or hug her or kiss her and so forth, she would let them do so and, in a

short time, they would be free from greed and desire and enter the wisdom and liberation of bodhisattvas. She also said that all her achievements are a result of having learned, in a past life, from the Liberation-free-from-greed Bodhisattva, who is now Mañjūśrī.

Vasumitrā's manifestation of desire, just like King Anala's anger and Brāhman Jayoṣmāya's wrong view, never harmed any sentient being. On the contrary, they attained liberation through the three poisons and also used the three poisons to liberate sentient beings. That is, they understood the three poisons as Reality and lead sentient beings to realize the three poisons as Reality. For Chuandeng, their practices are evidence of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil:

> "Desire, anger and wrong view are cultivated evil. Through [desire], Vasumitrā attained the 'free-from-desire-liberation.' Through [anger], king Anala attained the 'delusion-liberation.' Through [wrong view], the Brāhman Jayoṣmāya attained the 'endless-round-liberation.' This is because during their causal stage they came to realize cultivated evil as inherent evil. When the interpenetration of inherent evil with all things is understood, there is no dharma it cannot reach. It spontaneously reaches the inherent good of the Buddha realm. Not only through this can they themselves see the Way, but through this they liberate sentient beings."[79]

For sentient beings, Chuandeng stresses that the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is an opportunity for them to become Buddhas. As Chuandeng explained before, the conventional way for sentient beings to enter the Buddha Way is through the good, but there are some who enter the Way through the evil. Chuandeng cites the two stories of Aṅgulimālika (*yang-jue-mo-luo* 央掘魔羅) and Ajātaśatru (*a She-shi wang* 阿闍世王) as examples of how someone who has committed a heinous crime can begin to become a Buddha through the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Aṅgulimālika and Ajātaśatru both killed people. Upon repenting for their evil deeds and by focusing on the evil of their killing, they were able to realize cultivated evil as inherent evil.

---

[79] Ibid., 424c.

Aṅgulimālika kept the precept of no-killing saying, "I must not be able to keep the precept of no-killing. I should often keep taking the lives of sentient beings. The so-called sentient beings mean all the measureless afflictions. If I can often destroy them, it means keeping the precept of no-killing."[80] Ajātaśatru killed his father and part of his karma resulted in the appearance of abscesses all over his body. He also worried about falling into hell. Upon repenting, he went to the Buddha and the Buddha told Ajātaśatru to contemplate on the empty nature of killing. As soon as Ajātaśatru realized that his terrible actions, and those who were hurt by his terrible actions, were empty, he entered the Buddha-Way.[81] In Chuandeng's view, Ajātaśatru realized cultivated evil as inherent evil, a clear example of an actual practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[82]

Chuandeng invokes Huaize to emphasize that, "inherent evil is a different name for Buddha-nature." Chuandeng points out that inherent evil and inherent good interpenetrate each other and are identical to nature. The utmost good is the inherent Buddha realm, making the inherent nine realms evil. Furthermore, since the thoughts and actions of sentient beings are cultivated evil at every moment, a sentient being can contemplate cultivated evil as inherent evil at any moment. When the cultivated evil of the nine realms returns to the inherent evil of the nine realms, then it simultaneously returns to the inherent good of the Buddha realm. Chuandeng says:

> "Everything and every thought [of sentient beings] are no other than cultivated evil. These all are identical to inherent evil. When the interpenetration of inherent evil with everything is understood, there is no dharma it does not reach. Thus it spontaneously includes the inherent good of the Buddha realm. Through this understanding, one has no need to turn around (abandon cultivated evil and turn to

---

[80] Ibid., 427a.

[81] Ibid., 430b-c.

[82] Ibid., 430c.

cultivated good) and thus one clarify this mind and sees this nature."[83]

Chuandeng connects inherent evil to the Chan term "illuminate the mind and see one's nature" (*ming xin jian xing* 明心見性). For him, the mind at which the Chan practitioner is aiming must be the mind of inherent evil that exists in the present entity of cultivated evil, and the mind of inherent evil includes the inherent good of the Buddha realm. In other words, the Chan method of becoming a Buddha is no other than the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil.[84] Chuandeng concludes his treatise *On Nature Including Good and Evil* with an exhortation that the teaching in this treatise should be earnestly disseminated just as his fictitious Confucian visitor has vowed to do.

On Nature Including Good and Evil represents Chuandeng's efforts to revive the Tiantai doctrine in the late Ming. As mentioned in chapter six, during the late Ming, the conceptions of reward for doing good and retribution for doing evil were deeply internalized by the general public. Moral conduct was Confucianism's primary concern, making the idea of inherent evil difficult for many Confucianists to accept. Indeed, it was not easy for Chuandeng to advocate the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. Yet, like his predecessors, he incorporated contemporary significant thought to advance the status of the Tiantai teaching. He interpreted that the practice of the twenty-five methods in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is the practice of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil, making the sutra the authoritative scripture that supports the Dharma-gate of inherent evil itself. Unlike his predecessors, however, he upheld the Tiantai school, not by belittling the doctrines of other schools but, by harmonizing them with Tiantai thought. In accordance with the

---

[83] Ibid., 431a.

[84] Ibid.

syncretic trend underway at the time, he made the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, esteemed by most Chinese Buddhist schools at this time, relevant to Tiantai and demonstrated that the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is the common denominator of practice among the different schools.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

Throughout *On Nature Including Good and Evil*, Chuandeng wants his reader to know that at any given moment or in any given thing, thought, emotion, or action, in everything that is around us, there is an opportunity for enlightenment. There is an opportunity to know and stay in Reality. How is this so? As humans, or as sentient beings of any of the nine realms, we live in evil at every moment. As long as we do not understand the Reality of the evil in which we live, we will always reside in evil. Thus, given this predicament, we can only rely on evil in order to reach Reality. He wants the reader to know that everything in our manifest world is inherent, pure, and everywhere. It is the entire universe that includes all the good and all the evil. All the evil is inherent good and all the good is inherent evil, and both are no different from Reality. Thus, when we are able to see that evil is inherent, pure, and everywhere and that it is actually the good, we can seize the myriad opportunities around us for enlightenment and use inherent evil to enlighten others.

In this concluding chapter, I would like to recapitulate the main points I raised in the dissertation. Chuandeng's theory and practice represent the transformation and reinforcement of nature-inclusion thought in the late Ming. Emphasizing that inherent evil is pure rather than defiled, he framed his theory by the dynamics of essence and function and focused on the ten realms as Buddha-nature. His practice was to contemplate that any one thought or any one thing in the phenomenal nine realms is inherent evil and this inherent evil is pure and exactly the entirety of the ten realms, i.e., Reality. In other words, only when we can see any evil in its present entity as the entirety

of the ten realms, then we can see that this evil is nothing more than pure and this is where we find our Buddha-nature that includes both good and evil.

Chuandeng's defining feature, as a late-Ming Tiantai thinker, is his use of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. He was the first to make this sutra the fundamental text of nature-inclusion thought. He drew from the text the themes of the seven elements to articulate in detail how it is that inherent evil is pure. He connected the seven elements to the ten realms and saw that the natures of each of the seven elements are inherent in Suchness (Buddha-nature, mind-nature). Thus, he reinterpreted the sutra as saying that all the good and the evil of the ten realms are inherent in nature, and the inherent good and the inherent evil are pure and no different from the entirety of the ten realms. In this way, he brought his readers back to Zhiyi's view of Reality and reinforced that good and evil inherently coexist in and as Buddha-nature and are mutually included in and identical to one another. Furthermore, Chuandeng reinterpreted the seven practices of the seven elements to develop the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. He proved that the seven practices by means of contemplating the seven phenomenal elements as Suchness are the Tiantai practices of contemplating cultivated evil as inherent evil and underlined that the purpose of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil is to help us reach the good of the Buddha realm, i.e., enlightenment. Chuandeng further demonstrated that nature-inclusion is at the very core of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* itself. Simultaneously, we can see that the teachings of the pure mind found in the sutra also redefined Tiantai nature-inclusion thought. Thus, the sutra, as the ultimate Round teaching claimed by Chuandeng, was his platform to assert the superiority of the Tiantai School.

As an avowed Tiantai thinker, Chuandeng also relied on the 1000 year-old legacy

left to him by his predecessors to reinforce nature-inclusion thought. Chuandeng reinterpreted Zhiyi's doctrinal classification system to reveal that inherent evil is the reason why the Buddha came to this world to teach. Chuandeng's formulations explaining nature-inclusion are based on Zhanran's concept of the dynamics of "unchanging Suchness" and "following conditions" and he heavily relied on Zhili's more thorough development of these concepts. Many of the terms in the titles of the eight gates were culled directly from Zhanran and Zhili's ideas about the non-duality of essence and function. Chuandeng used "unchanging Suchness" to define that the inherent good and the inherent evil of the ten realms are essence and used "following conditions" to explain that the manifestations of cultivated good and cultivated evil are function. He framed everything in his theory and practice from the perspectives of essence, function, and the non-duality of both to underscore that "Buddha-nature includes good and evil," saying that Buddha-nature should only be described by the undeniable unity of essence and function. Huaize's legacy provided Chuandeng with the essential idea that inherent evil is no other than Buddha-nature. Huaize also laid the groundwork for Chuandeng to prove the universal presence of inherent evil in all the Mahāyāna sutras.

In developing his ideas on essence and function, Chuandeng broadly took from Zhili's theory that "the non-differentiated is the differentiated" and "the differentiated remain non-differentiated." Zhili developed these terms to make a clear distinction between the Huayan and the Tiantai. He rejected the Huayan notion that separates the non-differentiated pure mind as essence from the differentiated nine realms as function. He emphasized that there is no duality in essence and function because both contain the Three Thousand Worlds. Chuandeng expanded this idea by way of the seven elements

topic in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and claimed that in the non-differentiated Suchness there are the seven differentiated elements and, in one differentiated phenomenal element, there is the entirety of the non-differentiated Suchness. Thus, there is no difference between essence and function; the ten realms appear differently only because one realm is appearing and the others are hidden. Chuandeng called this dynamic "while one realm manifests, the other nine realms are hidden." As we saw in chapter seven, Chuandeng drew twelve diagrams and, inspired by the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, wrote ten metaphors to more fully demonstrate his ideas. It is interesting to see is that Chuandeng used the dynamics of essence and function as a necessary way to prove the idea of "Buddha-nature includes good and evil" while Zhili explained the dynamics of essence and function by nature-inclusion to exclude Huayan's thought from it all together.

In terms of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil, Chuandeng also used Zhili's ideas of "contemplate cultivated evil as inherent evil" and the "dung beetle of six identities" to prove the non-duality of essence and function and to drive home the point that inherent evil is pure. Chuandeng found unconventional examples to make his point. He uniquely interpreted many scriptural stories to show how Buddhas and bodhisattvas use their inherent functions of the three poisons to help sentient beings understand Reality. We saw this in the story of how the Buddha saved the 500 merchants and their assailant by manifesting the inherent function of killing to kill the assailant, and, in the story of beautiful Vasumitrā who freed her visitors through the inherent function of sexual desire. None of these apparent evil actions ever really harmed the visitors or the assailant because they were performed from the point of Reality. Chuandeng also cites unconventional examples to show how sentient beings can use the three poisons to reach

enlightenment. As in the case of Aṅgulimālika, who was able to turn his unenlightened actions of killing people into the enlightened action of killing afflictions by perfectly understanding the Reality of killing.

In the development of nature-inclusion thought, Chuandeng was the first Tiantai thinker who thoroughly reinterpreted the Five Periods to elevate the idea of inherent evil as the ultimate teaching given by the Buddha throughout his life. Zhiyi set up the Five Periods to demonstrate that the *Lotus Sutra* was the supreme teaching of the Buddha and focused on the Threefold Truth. Through a comparison of Zhiyi and Chuandeng, we can see that Chuandeng significantly shifted the focus from Zhiyi's Threefold Truth to inherent evil and made inherent evil the supreme teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*. He proved that in all the Mahāyāna sutras the Buddha taught inherent evil and in doing so he also justified inherent evil to be the core teaching of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. Although Chuandeng's predecessors make significant strides in advancing the concept of inherent evil, none of them took the bold approach of establishing the relevancy of inherent evil in the Buddha's life as represented in the Five Periods.

Chuandeng was also the first Buddhist thinker to incorporate Chinese traditional thought into the Tiantai doctrinal classification system through the lens of "nature includes good and evil." Chuandeng relied on doctrinal classification to create a hierarchical synthesis of Confucianism and Buddhism. He fused early Confucian theory about human nature with the Tiantai idea of inherent good and inherent evil by saying that Confucius understood good and evil as the inherent function of nature because Confucius never used the value judgment of good and evil to characterize nature. Nevertheless, Chuandeng harshly criticized later Confucian thinkers for

misunderstanding nature and using the value judgment of good and evil to characterize it. He found therefore the Confucian theory lacking because it confines nature only to the human realm. Chuandeng's incorporation of Confucianism into the doctrinal classification system was a response to its influence in the late Ming. It is also an example of how Chuandeng harnessed the trend of syncretism in the late Ming to revive and elevate Tiantai philosophy.

As we have already seen, Chuandeng drew on two new elements, the teaching of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Confucian theory of human nature, to make Tiantai relevant to Buddhism. These two elements reflected the syncretic intellectual trend both within Buddhism and within the three teachings in the Ming. Chuandeng's adoption of new elements is not unique to the developmental history of the Tiantai doctrine. Rather, this study shows that this is the particular manner in which Tiantai thinkers developed Tiantai doctrine. In the Sui, Zhiyi created the idea that nature includes good and evil using Chinese terms rather than Indian terms. In the Tang, Zhanran absorbed the concept of "Suchness that follows conditions" and in the Song, Zhili reinterpreted Zhanran's theory through "identity." In the Yuan, Huaize co-opted Chan's idea to say that inherent evil is the Mind-seal transmission of the Buddha. From these different intellectual backgrounds, not only did they incorporate new elements to strengthen the Tiantai teaching but they also used their reinterpretations of these influential elements to compete with other Buddhist schools in order to enhance the status of Tiantai.

Influenced by the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra,* Chuandeng harnessed its underlying syncretic character to revive Tiantai. The late-Ming intellectual scene was characterized by syncretism and the popularity of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* reflected this trend in the Three

Teachings in One movement and among the Buddhist schools. Neo-Confucianism's focus shifted from the Heavenly Principle to mind-nature and, for the first time, the Buddhist concept of mind-nature became the common view among the three teachings. This created an atmosphere of openness, especially among Confucians who began to turn in greater numbers to Buddhism to find a deeper understanding of mind-nature. The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* became the focal text by which Confucians studied mind-nature and leading Buddhists monks used the sutra to advocate the superiority of Buddhism over Confucianism.

The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* played a more influential role in the revival of Buddhism in the late Ming, and this is another reason why Chuandeng turned to this text to support his ideas. Buddhism, by the mid-Ming, was in serious decline because of the neglect of disciplines and scriptural study. There was widespread discord among different schools. This situation prompted many concerned monks to initiate efforts to correct the course in which Chinese Buddhism found itself, thus sparking a revival. Their efforts in regenerating Buddhism resulted in a "large-scale convergence" of the different schools, and it was this syncretic approach that saved the monastic order from its overall decline. The return to scriptural study became the primary emphasis for many leading Ming monks, such as the four great masters, who advocated the "unity of Chan and Scriptural study." The *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was considered the most authoritative text to read and it was highly promoted as representing all the Buddhist teachings because of its all-inclusive doctrines. These monks used the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* to harmonize the teachings of the different schools making the text the symbol of unity in the late Ming. Chuandeng's incorporation of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* is also an important response to this

contemporary trend.

Unlike his predecessors who incorporated the influential ideas of their time and pitted themselves against other schools to elevate Tiantai, Chuandeng incorporated contemporary influential ideas to harmonize with the other schools and stayed within the syncretic trend of his time. While Chuandeng demonstrated that nature-inclusion thought is the very core of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, he also showed nature-inclusion thought to be the common ground upon which all the different Buddhist schools can unify. When Chuandeng declared that all things in the pure mind are pure, including inherent evil, he directly connected inherent evil with the “pure mind” idea discussed in the sutra and, in this way, he bridged Tiantai nature-inclusion thought with the pure mind idea found in the Huayan thought of nature origination. Chuandeng affirmed that Chan’s idea of “seeing into one’s nature” is precisely seeing the ten realms inherent in Buddha-nature, thus harmonizing Chan and Tiantai. By seeing the direct rewards of the Buddha and circumstantial rewards of the pure land as inherent in Buddha-nature, Chuandeng harmonized Pure Land thought with nature-inclusion. He made the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* relevant to nature-inclusion and thus was able to harmonize all the teachings with nature-inclusion. These were the key factors leading to the revival of the Tiantai doctrine in the late Ming.

My study provides a window into Ming Tiantai and a new perspective on Ming Buddhism. The revival of Tiantai led by Chuandeng shows that Ming Tiantai was not invisible but, rather, was an important part of the revival of Buddhism in the late Ming. Chuandeng was a culminator and innovator of Tiantai thought. By integrating the theories of his predecessors, he redefined the Five Periods of the doctrinal classification system to

uphold the idea of inherent evil and built his theory on the framework of the dynamics of essence and function. By incorporating the teaching of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and Confucianism, he reinterpreted nature-inclusion and used the sutra to further develop the Dharma-gate of inherent evil. He harmonized all the different teachings with nature-inclusion and shifted the focus of inherent evil to purity from that of defilement. He also stressed that the ultimate goal of the Dharma-gate of inherent evil was to reach the inherent good of the Buddha.

Chuandeng was active in every aspect of his monastic life: as a dedicated practitioner, a committed reformer, a passionate protector of Buddhism, an eloquent and charismatic speaker, a virtuous leader, a prolific author, and an innovative scholar. Aside from his philosophical developments, his activities were also significant to the revival of Tiantai. He rebuilt Gaoming Monastery and made it the headquarters for the dissemination of the Tiantai teaching. Inch by inch, pebble by pebble, and, accompanied by ordeals and some would say by miracles as well, he built it applying his creative ideas for each structure. This endeavor took the rest of his life and required much strength. Upon his initial enlightenment in the sutra, he made the ear-organ method taught in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* his life-long practice. He was the first to build the Śūraṃgama Altar according to the descriptions in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and held the strict 100-day Śūraṃgama Samādhi retreat every year until his death. He also held different repentance rituals, such as the Lotus Samādhi Repentance Ritual, the Great Compassion Samādhi Repentance Ritual and the Repentance Ritual of Amitābha Buddha. For more than forty years, he constantly traveled to give extended lectures, most frequently on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*. He wrote many works on Tiantai, Chan, Pure Land, rituals, temple

gazetteers, and so forth and several works of his works on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* were especially famous. He attracted a great number of monks and lay followers and brought Tiantai a prosperity it had not seen since the Song. He was praised by his contemporaries who claimed that "the prestigious virtue and eloquent ability of the great master Wujin 無盡 (Chuandeng) is not inferior to Lianchi 蓮池 (Zhuhong) and Xuelang 雪浪. … All the noble gentlemen throughout country came to prostrate before him and take refuge in him. There is no doubt that he is the dragon-elephant (i.e, the superior monk in insight)."[1]

Tiantai doctrine is vast, broad and profound. Its legacy spans more than 1400 years. In this work, I have provided only a sliver of Tiantai philosophy as promulgated by Chuandeng during the late Ming. Due to limited time and space, I have only focused on his main philosophy and left the door open to any future investigation I might embark upon. There are many other topics that can be discussed regarding Chuandeng's overall thought and activities. For example, an analysis of Chuandeng's body of work on the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* can expand the knowledge of the sutra's pivotal role in the Ming and Chuandeng's insights which resulted from his practices based on the sutra itself. Chuandeng's criticisms of his contemporaries' understanding of the sutra can shed light on how other Ming monks viewed the text. All of this can provide a deeper understanding of Ming Tiantai and Ming Buddhism. Another topic I would suggest exploring is Chuandeng's relationship with the laity which can provide us with more knowledge about late-Ming Chinese society. In Chuandeng's two gazetteers, in which he recorded his interactions with more than 150 laypeople, many of them wrote various letters, commendations, essays, and poems dedicated to him. In some of these letters, we can see

[1] Chuandeng, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 394.

how, in difference aspects, he corresponded with and influenced his Confucian and high ranking government official followers, going so far as to leverage their influence with the imperial government to help waive the heavy tax burden on his monastery. Chuandeng's activities in rebuilding Gaoming Monastery are also worth studying. Gaoming was his life long project and represents not only his ideals but also the trials and tribulations he had to overcome in rebuilding it. In his detailed accounts of how he set up the policy to reform and lead the Tiantai monastic order, we can see how he performed different rituals to fulfill the Tiantai practice, in particular late-Ming Tiantai practice.

Chuandeng's influence continued after his death. His disciples continued to teach the Tiantai doctrine in different places and up to the early Qing dynasty "the wheel of the Tiantai doctrine kept spreading and flowering."[2] Shoujiao 受教 (n.d.) supplemented the *Youxi Gazetteer* with the activities of Chuadeng's disciples in the early Qing.[3] Yet, it is Zhixu, one of the late-Ming four great masters, who continued to promote the Tiantai teaching. Zhixu met Chuandeng only once but became close friends with two of Chuandeng's direct disciples Biru Zhenggao 璧如正鎬 (1580-1631) and Guiyi Shouchou 歸一受籌 (n.d.).[4] Zhuxi used Tiantai thought to talk about Buddhism but he considered himself unworthy to be a holder of the Tiantai lineage, avoiding at all costs to refer himself directly as a Tiantai thinker.[5] Regardless, his own disciples considered him to be Chuandeng's successor and thus belonging to the Tiantai lineage because he often

2 Jiyin, *Zong tong bian nian* 宗統編年, X86: 316c. "台教之輪。傳持絢爛。"

3 Chuandeng, *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志, 282.

4 Ibid.

5 See his *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36: 342.

praised Chuandeng's teachings. Strikingly, Zhuxi's words upon Chuandeng's death intimated a transfer of the lineage itself, "I offer three incense burns on my arm and extend my hand [to Chuandeng] to ask for the seal." This lineage exists up to this day. Zhixu's regard for Chuandeng was so deep that upon Chuandeng's death, Zhixu wrote a eulogy[6] in his own blood and marked his arm with three incense burns as an offering to Chuandeng, greatly regretting that he did not understand Chuandeng's teaching on the only occasion they met at Gaoming Monastery. Among his numerous works, we can see that Zhixu used the Tiantai doctrine to explain Buddhism. As he said, "Witnessing the contemporary [Buddhist] ills, I then know that without Tiantai the ills cannot be cured. If Tiantai survives, then Buddhism survives. If Tiantai dies, then Buddhism dies."[7] Zhixu valued Chuandeng a great deal saying, "My senior [Chuandeng] is indeed a pillar. He is the bright sun at the zenith in the sky."[8]

---

[6] See his *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論, J36: 396.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

Bibliography

A. Primary Sources

J = *Jiaxing dazangjing* 嘉興大藏經 (CBETA Electronic Version 2010)

T = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (CBETA Electronic Version 2010)

X = *Wan xinzuan xuzangjing* 卍新纂續藏經 (CBETA Electronic Version 2010)

Bensong 本嵩. *Zhu huayan jing ti fa jie guan men song* 註華嚴經題法界觀門頌. T45. no. 1885.

Baoliang 寶亮. *Da bo nie pan jing ji jie* 大般涅槃經集解. T37. no. 1763.

CBETA (*Chinese Electronic Tripitaka Collection*). Taipei: Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, 2010.

Chanxiu 禪修. *Yi leng yan jiu jing shi chan* 依楞嚴究竟事懺. X74. no. 1478.

Chenquan 澄觀. *Huayan jing shu* 華嚴經疏. T35. no. 1735.

Chengshi 成時, ed. *Jing tu shi yao* 淨土十要. X61. no. 1164.

Chuandeng 傳燈. *Tiantai shan fang wai zhi* 天台山方外志. Taipei: Xin wen feng, 1987.

———. *Fa hua xuan yi ji lue* 法華經玄義輯略. X28. no. 590.

———. *Guan wu liang shou fo jing tu song* 觀無量壽佛經圖頌. X22. no. 412.

———. *Jing tu sheng wu sheng lun* 淨土生無生論. T47. no. 1975.

———. *Leng yan jing xuan yi* 楞嚴經玄義. X13. no. 282.

———. *Leng yan jing yuan tong shu* 楞嚴經圓通疏. X12. no. 281.

———. *Leng yan jing yuan tong shu qian mao* 楞嚴經圓通疏前茅. X14. no. 297.

———. *Li wuzhong shi fo qi zhi yi shi* 禮吳中石佛起止儀式. X74. no. 1489.

———. *Mi tuo jing lue jie yuan zhong chao* 彌陀經略解圓中鈔. X22. no. 423.

———. *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註. X57. no. 969.

———. *Wei mo jie jing wu wo shu* 維摩詰經無我疏. X19. no. 348.

———. *Wujin fa shi jing tu fa yu* 無盡法師淨土法語. Ed. Zhizheng 知正. X61. no. 1164-12.

———. *Xing shan e lun* 性善惡論. X57. no. 970.

———. *Yong jia chan zong ji zhu* 永嘉禪宗集註. X63. no. 1242.

———. *Youxi bie zhi* 幽溪別志. *Zhongguo fo si shi cong kan xu bian* 中國佛寺志叢刊續編. Vol. 9. Nanjing: Jiang su gu ji chu ban she, 2001.

Da bao ji jing 大寶積經 (*Mahā-ratnakūṭa-sūtra*). T11. no. 310.

Da bo nie pan jing 大般涅槃經 (*Mahā-parinirvāna-sūtra*). T12. no. 374.

Da fo ding shou leng yan jing 大佛頂首楞嚴經 (*Śūraṃgama Sūtra*). T19. no. 945.

Da sheng qi xin lun 大乘起信論 (*Awakening of Faith*). T32. no. 1666.

Dai, Shu'an 戴舒菴. *Tiantai zhi lue: Zhejiang sheng* 天台治略: 浙江省. Taipei: Cheng wen chu ban she, 1970.

Damo 達默. *Jing tu sheng wu sheng lun hui ji* 淨土生無生論會集. X61. no. 1169.

Daodian 道殿. *Xian mi yuantong chengfo xin yao ji* 顯密圓通成佛心要集. T46. no. 1955.

Daoxuan 道宣. *Ji gujin fo dao lun heng* 集古今佛道論衡. T52. no. 2104.

Dehui 德輝. *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規. T48. no. 2025.

Fanqi 梵琦. 楚石梵琦禪師語錄. Ed. Zuguang 祖光. X71. no. 1420.

Feng, Mengzhen 馮夢禎. *Kuai xue tang ji* 快雪堂集. Tainan, Taiwan: Zhuang yan wen hua shi ye you xian gong si, 1997.

Fo shuo guan fo san mei hai jing 佛說觀佛三昧海經. T15. no. 643.

Guo qu xian zai yin guo jing 過去現在因果經. T3. no. 189.

Guo, Zizhang 郭子章. *Mingzhou Ayuwang shan zhi* 明州阿育王山志. Taipei: Ming wen shu ju, 1980.

Hanshan 憨山. *Ba shi ba zu dao ying zhuan zan* 八十八祖道影傳贊. X86. no. 1608.

———. *Hanshan lao ren meng you ji* 憨山老人夢遊集. Ed. Tongjiong 通炯. X73. no. 1456.

———. *Leng yan jing tong yi* 楞嚴經通議. X12. no. 279.

———. *Lengyan jing xuan jing* 楞嚴經懸鏡. X12. no. 277.

Hongzhi 宏智. *Hongzhi chanshi guanlu* 宏智禪師廣錄. T48. no. 2001.

Huaize 懷則. *Jing tu jing guan yao men* 淨土境觀要門. T47. no. 1971.

———. *Tiantai chuan fo xin yin ji* 天台傳佛心印記. T46. no. 1938.

Huaiyan 懷遠. *Lengyan jing yi shu shi yao chao* 楞嚴經義疏釋要鈔. X11. no. 0267.

Huanlun 幻輪. *Shi jian ji gu lue xu ji* 釋鑑稽古略續集. T49. no. 2038.

Huijiao 慧皎. *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳. T50. no. 2059.

Huijun 慧均. *Dasheng si lun xuan yi* 大乘四論玄義. X46. no. 784.

Hui shang pu sa wen da shan quan jing 慧上菩薩問大善權經. T12. no. 345.

Huisi 慧思. *Da sheng zhi guan fa men* 大乘止觀法門. T46. no. 1924.

Jiao, Hong 焦竑. *Leng yan jing jing jie ping ling* 楞嚴經精解評林. X15. no. 301.

Jiaoguang 交光. *Lengyan jing zheng mai shu xuan shi* 楞嚴經正脉疏懸示. X12. no. 274.

Jicang 吉藏. *Dasheng xuan lun* 大乘玄論. T45. no. 1853.

Jingyuan 淨源. *Shou leng yan tan chang xiu zheng yi* 首楞嚴壇場修證儀. X74. no. 1477.

Jiyin 紀蔭. *Zong tong bian nian* 宗統編年. X86. no. 1600.

Juefan 覺範. *Lin jian lu* 林間錄. X87. no. 1624.

Li, Zhi 李贄. *Fen Shu* 焚書. Beijing : Zhong hua shu ju, 1961.

Lin, Zhaoen 林兆恩. *Xin Nan Pian* 信難篇. *Linzi quan ji* 林子全集. Tainan : Zhuang yan wen hua shi ye you xian gong si, 1995.

Liuzu dashi fabao tan jing 六祖大師法寶壇經 (*Platform Sutra*). T48. no. 2008.

Liu, Mi 劉謐. *Sanjiao pingxin lun* 三教平心論. T52. no. 2117.

Lu, Xixing 陸西星. *Lengyan jing shuo yue* 楞嚴經說約. X14. no. 294.

———. *Lengyan jing shu zhi* 楞嚴經述旨. X14. no. 295.

Mailang 麥浪. *Yunmen Mailang huai chan shi zong men she nan* 雲門麥浪懷禪師宗門設難. Ed. Xu Yuanzhao 許元釗. X73. no. 1457.

Miao fa lian hua jing 妙法蓮華經 (*Lotus Sutra*). Trans. Kumārajīva. T9. no. 261.

Ming shi lu 明實錄. Nan'gang: Zhong yang yan jiu yuan li shi yu yan yan jiu suo, 1962.

Minghe 明河. *Bu xu gao seng chaun* 補續高僧傳. X77. no. 1524.

Muan 睦庵. *Zu ting shi yuan* 祖庭事苑. X64. no. 1261.

Peng, Jiqing 彭際清. *Ju shi zhuan* 居士傳. X88. no. 1646.

Peng, Xisu 彭希涑. *Jing tu sheng xian lu* 淨土聖賢錄. X78. no. 1549.

Puji 普濟. *Wu deng hui yuan* 五燈會元. X80. no. 1565.

Pudu 普度. *Lushan lianzong baojian* 廬山蓮宗寶鑑. X47. no. 1973.

Qian, Qianyi 錢謙益. *Leng yan jing shu jie meng chao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔. X13. no. 287.

Qisong 契嵩. *Tan jin wen ji* 鐔津文集. T52. no. 2115.

Renyue 仁岳. *Leng yan jing xun wen ji* 楞嚴經熏聞記. X11. no. 269.

Ruxing 如惺. *Da ming gao seng chaun* 大明高僧傳. T50. no. 2062.

Shiheng 士衡. *Tiantai jiu zu chuan* 天台九祖傳. T51. no. 2069.

Shoujiao 受教. *Jing tu sheng wu sheng lun qin wen ji* 淨土生無生論親聞記. X61. no. 1168.

Song, Kuiguang 宋奎光. *Jingshan zhi* 徑山志. Tainan, Taiwan: Zhuang yan wen hua shi ye you xian gong si, 1997.

Tanxiu 曇秀. *Ren tian bao jian* 人天寶鑑. X87. no. 1612.

Tongli 通理. *Lengyan jing zhizhang shu xuan shi* 楞嚴經指掌疏懸示. X16. no. 307.

Tongwen 性統. *Xu deng zheng tong* 續燈正統. X84. no. 1583.

Tongwen 通問. *Xu deng cun gao* 續燈存稿. X84. no. 1585.

Wang, Yangming 王陽明. *Chuan xi lu* 傳習錄. Taipei: Taiwan Shang wu yin shu guan, 1967.

Wei mo jie suo shuo jing 維摩詰所說經 (*Vimalakīrti Sutra*). Trans. Kumārajīva. T14. no. 475.

Weize 惟則. *Tianru Weize chan shi yulu* 天如惟則禪師語錄. Ed. Shanyu 善遇.X70. no. 1403.

Wenyi 文益. *Jinling qingliangyuan wenyi chanshi yulu* 金陵清涼院文益禪師語錄. T47. no. 1991.

Wu, Zhijing 吳之鯨. *Wulin fan zhi* 武林梵志. Taipei: Xin wen feng, 1987.

Wuzhu 無住. *Li dai fa bao ji* 曆代法寶記. T51. no. 2075.

Wuyi 無異. *Wuyi Yuanlai chan shi guang lu* 無異元來禪師廣錄. X72. no. 1435.

Xia, Shufang 夏樹芳. *Ming gong fa xi zhi* 名公法喜志. X88. no. 1649.

Xiang, Yuanxun 項元勳. *Taizhou jing ji zhi* 台州經籍志. Taipei: Guang wen shu ju, 1969.

XingzhongZuwang 興中祖旺. *Xianshou chuandeng lu* 賢首傳燈錄. Taipei: Da sheng jing she yin jing hui. 1996.

Xu fozu tong ji 續佛祖統紀. X75. no. 1515.

Xu, Wei 徐渭. *Xu Wenchang quan ji* 徐文長全集. Hongkong: Guang zhi shu ju, 1960.

Yanshou 延壽. *Zong jing lu* 宗鏡錄. T48. no. 2016.

Yixian 壹鹹. *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規. X63. no. 1250.

Yirun 儀潤. *Bai zhang cong lin qing gui zhen yi ji* 百丈叢林清規證義記. X63. no. 1244.

Yu, Chunxi 虞淳熙. *Yu Deyuan xian sheng ji* 虞德園先生集. *Si ku jin hui shu cong kan: Ji bu 43.* 四庫禁燬書叢刊: 集部 43. Beijing: Beijing chu ban she, 2000.

Yu, Qian 喻謙, ed. *Xin xu gao seng zhuan* 新續高僧傳. Taipei: Liu li ching fang, 1974.

Yuanzhao 元照. *Sifenlu xingshichao zichiji* 四分律行事鈔資持記. T40. no. 1805.

Zanning 贊寧. *Song gao seng chuan* 宋高僧傳. T50. no. 2061.

Zeng, Fengyi 曾鳳儀. *Lengyan jing zong tong* 楞嚴經宗通. X16. no. 318.

Zhang, Boduan 張伯端. *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇. *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書. Fascicle 30. *Zhentong Daozang* 正統道藏. Vol. 7. Taipei: Xin wen feng chu ban gong si, 1985.

Zhanran 湛然. *Jin gan pi* 金剛錍. T46. no. 1932.

———. *Fahua wenju ji* 法華文句記. T34. no. 1719.

———. *Fahua xuanyi shi qian* 法華玄義釋籤. T33. no. 1717.

———. *Mo he zhi guan fu xing chuan hong jue* 摩訶止觀輔行傳弘決. T46. no. 1912.

———. *Shi bu e men* 十不二門. T46. no. 1927.

———. *Zhiguan dayi* 止觀大意. T46. no. 1914.

Zhengji 正寂. *Jing tu sheng wu sheng lun zhu* 淨土生無生論註. X61. no. 1167.

Zhengshou 正受. *Lengyan jing helun* 楞嚴經合論. X12. no. 272.

Zhenjian 真鑑. *leng yan jing zheng mai shu* 楞嚴經正脈疏. X12. no. 275.

Zhenjue 真覺. *San qian you men song lue jie* 三千有門頌略解. X57. no. 954.

Zhenke 真可. *Zibo zun zhe quan ji* 紫柏尊者全集. Ed. Deqing 德清. X73. no. 1452.

———. *Zibo zun zhe bie ji* 紫柏尊者別集. Ed. Qian Qianyi 錢謙益. X73. no. 1453.

Zhili 知禮. *Guan yin xuan yi ji* 觀音玄義記. T34. no. 1727.

———. *Quan wu liang shou fo jing shu miao zong chao* 觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔. T37. no. 1751.

———. *Shi bu er men zhi yao chao* 十不二門指要鈔. T46. no. 1928.

———. *Siming shi yi shu* 四明十義書. T46. no. 1936.

———. *Siming zunzhe jiao xing lu* 四明尊者教行錄. T46. no. 1937.

Zhipan 志磐. *Fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀. T49. no. 2035.

Zhisheng 智昇. *Kaiyuan shi jiao lu* 開元釋教錄. T55. no. 2154.

———. *Xu gujin yijing tuji* 續古今譯經圖紀. T55. no. 2152.

Zhixu 智旭. *Leng yan jing wen ju* 楞嚴經文句. X13. no. 285.

———. *Leng yan jing xuan yi* 楞嚴經玄義. X13. no. 284.

———. *A Mi tou jing yao jie* 阿彌陀經要解. T37. no. 1762.

———. *Lingfeng Ouyi da shi zong lun* 靈峰蕅益大師宗論. J36. no. B348.

———. *Lingfeng zong lun* 靈峰宗論 (*Lingfeng's Discussion on the Teachings*). Taipei : Taiwan yin jing chu, 1986.

Zhiyi 智顗. *Guan yin xuan yi* 觀音玄義. T34. no. 1726.

———. *Jin guan ming jing xuan yi* 金光明經玄義. T39. no. 1783.

———. *Jing tu shi yi lun* 淨土十疑論. T47. no. 1961.

———. *Miao fa lian hua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義. T33. no. 1716.

———. *Miao fa lian hua jing xuan yi wen ju* 妙法蓮華經文句. T34. no. 1718.

———. *Mo he zhi guan* 摩訶止觀. T46. no. 1911.

———. *Qing guanyin jing shu* 請觀音經疏. T39. no. 1800.

———. *San guan yi* 三觀義. X55. no. 909.

———. *Si jiao yi* 四教義. X46. no. 1929.

———. *Si nian chu* 四念處. T46. no. 1918.

———. *Weimo jing xuan shu* 維摩經玄疏. T38. no. 1777.

Zhiyuan 智圓. *Qing guanyin jing shu chan yi chao* 請觀音經疏闡義鈔. T39. no. 1801.

Zhou, Kefu 周克復. *Fa hua jing chi yan ji* 法華經持驗記. X78. no. 1541.

———. *Jingtu chen zhong* 淨土晨鐘. X62. no. 1172.

Zhou, Yinbin 周應賓. *Pu tuo shan zhi* 普陀山志. Tainan: Zhuang yan wen hua shi ye, 1996.

Zhu fa wu xin jing 諸法無行經 (*Sarva-dharmāpravtti-nirdeśa*). T15.

Zhu, Xi 朱熹. *Hui an ji* 晦庵集. *Si ku quan shu* 四庫全書. Vol. 1145. Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan. 1983.

Zhuanyu 篆玉. *Da zhao qing lu si zhi* 大昭慶律寺志. Taipei: Xin wen feng, 1989.

Zhuhong 袾宏. *Amituo jing shu chao* 阿彌陀經疏鈔. X22. no. 424.

———. *Fanwang pusa jie jing yi shu fa yin* 梵網菩薩戒經義疏發隱. X38. no. 679.

———. *Huangming mingseng jive* 皇明名僧輯略. X84. no. 1581.

———. *Jingtu yi bian* 淨土疑辨. T47. no. 1977.

———. *Lianchi da shi quan ji* 蓮池大師全集. Tainan: He yu chu ban she, 1999.

———. *Leng yan jing mo xiang ji* 楞嚴經摸象記. X12. no. 276.

Ziqing 自慶. *Zeng xiu jiao yuan qing gui* 增修教苑清規. X57. no. 968.

Zixuan 子璿. *Lengyan yi shu* 楞嚴義疏. T39. no. 1799.

Zonggao 宗杲. *Dahui pujue chanshi yulu* 大慧普覺禪師語錄. T47. no. 1998.

Zongjian 宗鑑. *Shi men zheng tong* 釋門正統. X75. no. 1513.

Zongmi 宗密. *Chan yuan zhu quan ji du xu* 禪源諸詮集都序. T48. no. 2015.

———. *Yuanjue jing da shu* 圓覺經大疏. X9. no.243.

———. *Yuanjue jing da shu yi chao* 圓覺經大疏釋義鈔. X9. no.245.

Zongxiao 宗曉. *Leban wen lei* 樂邦文類. T47. no. 1969.

Zunshi 遵式. *Tianzhu bie ji* 天竺別集. X57. no. 951.

B. Secondary Sources in Chinese and Japanese

Andō, Toshio 安藤俊雄. *Tendai gaku* 天台學 (*Tiantai Studies*). Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1989.

———. *Tendai Shisōshi* 天台思想史 (*A History of Tiantai Thought*). Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1959.

———. *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* 天台性具思想論 (*On the Tiantai Philosophy of Nature-inclusion*). Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1973.

———. *Tiantai xing ju si xiang lun* 天臺性具思想論. Trans. Shi Yanpei 釋演培. Taipei: Tian hua chu ban she gong si, 1989.

———. "Nyorai seiaku shiso no sosetsusya—kanjo setsu eno hanron" 如来性悪思想の創説者——潅頂説への反論. *Otani gakuho* 大谷学報. 44, no.1 (1965): 1-22.

———. "Yukei dento no kyogaku" 幽渓伝灯の教学. *Otani gakuho* 大谷学報. 34, no.3 (1954): 1-12.

———. "Guekichigyoku no syogu shiso" 藕益智旭の性具思想. *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究. 3, no.1 (1954): 273-76.

Araki, Kengo 荒木見悟. *Bukkyō to Yōmeigaku* 佛教と陽明學. Tōkyō: Daisan Bunmeisha, 1979.

———. *Mindai shisō kenkyū: Mindai ni okeru Jukyō to Bukkyō no kōryū* 明代思想研究: 明代における儒教と佛教の交流. Tōkyō: Sōbunsha, 1972.

———. "Minmatsu bukkyo no seikaku" 明末仏教の性格. *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu ronshū* 駒沢大学仏教学部論集. 21 (1990): 15-28.

———. *Yōmeigaku no kaiten to Bukkyō* 陽明学の開展と仏教. Tōkyō : Kenbun Shuppan, 1984.

Cai, Huiming 蔡惠明. "Tiantai Chuandeng da shi yu 'sheng wu sheng lun'" 天台傳燈大師與《生無生論》. *Tiazhou fo jiao* 台州佛教. 10 (1996): 33-35.

Chen, Baoliang 陳寶良. "Ming dai ru dao de he liu ji qi shi su hua" 明代儒佛道的合流及其世俗化. *Zhejiang xue kan* 浙江學刊. 2 (2002): 153-59.

Chen, Jian 陳堅. *Fan nao ji pu ti: tiantai zong 'xing e' si xiang yan jiu* 煩惱即菩提:天台宗「性惡」思想研究. Gaoxiong, Taiwan: Fo guang shan wen jiao ji jin hui, 2001.

Chen, Yingshan 陳英善. *Tiantai xing ju si xiang* 天臺性具思想. Taipei: Dong da, 1997.

———. *Tiantai yuanqi zhongdao shixiang lun* 天台緣起中道實相論 (*On the Tiantai Doctrince of the Real-mark Qua the Conditionally Arising Middle Way*). Taipei: Dong chu, 1995.

Chen, Yongge 陳永革. *Wan ming fo xue de fu xing yu kun jing* 晚明佛學的復興與困境. Gaoxiong, Taiwan: Fo guang shan wen jiao ji jin hui, 2001.

Chen, Yuh-Neu 陳玉女. "Ming dai yu jia jiao seng de zhuan zhi hua ji qi jing chan huo dong" 明代瑜伽教僧的專職化及其經懺活動. *Xin shi ji zong jiao yan jiu* 新世紀宗教研究. 3, no. 1 (2004): 38-88.

Chen, Yunning 陳運寧. *Zhongguo fo jiao yu Song Ming li xue* 中國佛教與宋明理學. Changsha: Hunan chu ban she, 1999.

Dong, Ping 董平. *Tiantai zong yan jiu* 天台宗研究. Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002.

Fujii, Kyōkō 藤井教公. "Chi〔gi〕kara tannen e—syogu setsu no baai" 智〔ギ〕から湛然へ——性具説の場合. *Indo tetsugaku Bukkyōgaku* 印度哲学仏教学. 12 (1997): 1-25.

Gong, Jun 龔雋. *Da sheng qi xin lun yu fo xue Zhongguo hua* 大乘起信論與佛學中國化. Taipei: Wen jin chu ban she, 1995.

Gu, Weikang 顧偉康. *Chan jing he yi liu lue* 禪淨合一流略. Taipei: Dong da, 1997.

Guo, Peng 郭朋. *Ming Qing fo jiao* 明清佛教. Fuzhou: Fujian ren min chu ban she, 1982.

Han, Jing 韓敬. *Fa yan quan yi* 法言全譯. Chengdu: Ba shu shu she, 1999.

Hattori, Junichi 服部淳一. "'Jodoseimusei ron' ni tsuite—mindai tendai jodokyo no eikyo"『浄土生無生論』について—明代天台浄土教の影響. *Bukkyō ronsō* 仏教論叢. 32 (1988): 44-47.

He, Xiaorong 何孝榮. "Lun ming dai zhong hou qi de yu die du seng" 論明代中后期的鬻牒度僧. *Nankai xue bao* 南開學報. 5 (2005): 61-68.

Heng, Yu 恒毓. *Fo dao ru xin xing lun bi jiao yan jiu* 佛道儒心性論比較研究. Gaoxiong, Taiwan: Fo guang shan wen jiao ji jin hui, 2001.

Hsiao, Li-Fen 蕭麗芬. "Tiantai chan fa zhi yan jiu." 天台懺法之研究. M.A. thesis. Zhong gua wen hua da xue 中國文化大學, Taiwan, 2000.

Hsieh, Pochou 謝伯洲. "Youxi Chuandeng jing tu sheng wu sheng lun yan jiu." 幽溪傳燈《淨土生無生論》研究. M.A. thesis. Quo li ping dong jiao yu da xue 國立屏東教育大學, Taiwan, 2006.

Huang, Xianian 黃夏年. "Chuandeng da shi de 'zhen ru bu bian shi jie ming fu men' chu tan" 傳燈大師的「真如不變十界冥伏門」初探. *Zhong wai fo jiao ren wu lun* 中外佛教人物論. Beijing: Zong jiao wen hua chu ban she, 2005. 119-133.

———. "Chuandeng da shi dui ru fa er jia xing shan e si xiang de pi pan" 傳燈大師對儒法二家性善惡思想的批判. *Dong nan wen hua* 東南文化. A supplement issue (1998): 65-69.

———. "Chuandeng da shi dui Zhizhe da shi de ji cheng－you men xing xue si xiang kuang jia de tao lun" 傳燈大師對智者大師的繼承－有門性學思想框架的討論. *Zhong guo fo xue* 中國佛學. 1, no. 1 (1998): 209-16.

Huiyue, Shi 釋慧嶽. *Tiantai jiao xue shi* 天台教學史 (*A history of Tiantai Doctrine*). 6th ed. Taipei: Zhonghua fo jiao wen xian bian zhuan she, 1995.

———. *Zhili* 知禮. Taipei: Dong da tu shu gu fen you xian gong si, 1995.

Ikeda, Rosan 池田魯參. "Keikei tannen ni oyoboshita kegon kyogaku no eikyo" 荊渓湛然に及ぼした華厳教学の影響. *Kegongaku ronshu* 華厳学論集 (1997): 333-348.

Iwaki, Hideki 河村孝照. "Mindai bukkyosya no kenkyu katsudo—tyusyakurui wo toshite" 明代仏教者の研究活動—注釈類を通して. *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究. 26, no. 2 (1978): 70-75.

Ji, Shengyi 季聖一. *Jing tu sheng wu sheng lun jiang yi* 淨土生無生論講義. Taipei: Da qian chu ban she, 1998.

Jiang, Canteng 江燦騰. *Ming Qing min guo fo jiao si xiang shi lun* 明清民國佛教思想史論. Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 1996.

———. *Wan Ming fo jiao gai ge shi* 晚明佛教改革史. Guilin: Guangxi shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2006.

———. *Zhongguo jin dai Fo jiao si xiang de zheng bian yu fa zhan* 中國近代佛敎思想的諍辯與發展. Taipei: Nan tian shu ju, 1998.

Jin, Xiting 金希庭. "Guan yu tiantai 'xing ju shan e lun' zhi xing cheng yu chan fa zhi kao cha－yi 'xing e' shuo wei zhong xin" 關於天台「性具善惡論」之形成與闡發之考察－以「性惡」說為中心. *Hua gang yan jiu xue bao* 華岡研究學報. 2, no. 1 (1997): (7)1-(7)24.

Keika, Atsuyoshi 桂華淳祥. "Chihoshi ni kisai sareru iori no kiroku yori mita min shin bukkyo—sekko chiho wo chushin ni" 地方志に記載される庵の記録よりみた明清仏教——浙江地方を中心に. *Otani gakuho* 大谷学報. 75, no. 1 (1995): 13-25.

Lai, Yonghai 賴永海. *Zhanran* 湛然. Taipei: Dong da, 1993.

———. *Zhongguo foxing lun* 中國佛性論 (*Chinese Theories of the Buddha-nature*). Taipei: Foguang, 1997.

Li, Chih-hua 李治華. "'Leng yan jing' yu Zhongguo zong pai" 「楞嚴經」與中國宗派 *Zhonghua fo xue yan jiu* 中華佛學研究. 2 (1998): 207-29.

———. "Lengyan jing zhexue zhi yanjiu" 楞嚴經哲學之研究 (A Study on The Philosophy of the Shurangama Sutra). M.A. thesis. Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan, 1993.

Lin, I Luan 林一鑾. "Ming Youxi Chuandeng (1554-1628) da shi zhi yan jiu." 明幽溪傳燈 (1554-1628) 大師之研究 (The Study on the Master Youxi Chuandeng (1554-1628) in the Ming Dynasty). M.A. thesis. Hua fan da xue 華梵大學, Taiwan, 2005.

Lu, Cheng 呂澂. *Zhongguo fo xue yuan liu lue jiang* 中國佛學源流略講. Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1979.

———. *Lu Cheng fo xue lun zhu xuan ji* 呂澂佛學論著選集. Jinan: Qi lu shu she, 1991.

Makita, Tairyo 牧田諦亮. "Chugoku bukkyo ni okeru gikyo kenkyu josetsu" 中国仏教における疑経研究序説. *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方学報. 35 (1964): 337-96.

Mochizuki, Shinko 望月信亨. *Chugoku Jodo kyorishi* 中国浄土教理史. Kyoto: Hozokan, 1964.

———. *Jōdokyō no kigen oyobi hattatsu* 淨土教の起源及發達. Tokyo: Tōkyō Kyōritsu sha, 1930.

Mou, Zongsan 牟宗三. *Foxing yu bore* 佛性與般若 (*Buddha-nature and Prajna*). Taipei: Xuesheng, 1977.

———. "Tiantai zong zhi shuai wei yu zhong xing" 天台宗之衰微與中興. *Fo guang xue bao* 佛光學報. 1 (1976): 28-56.

Muranaka, Yūshō 村中祐生. "Ryogon gyo no kaisyaku ni miru tendai kyogi" 楞厳経の解釈にみる天台教義. *Tendai gakuho* 天台学報. 26 (1984): 62-70.

Nan, Bingwen 南炳文 ed. *Fo dao mi mi zong jiao yu Ming dai she hui* 佛道秘密宗教與明代社會. Tianjin: Tianjin gu ji chu ban she, 2002.

Ng, Yu-kwan 吳汝鈞. *Fo xue yan jiu fang fa lun* 佛學研究方法論. Taipei: Taiwan xue sheng shu ju, 1983.

Omatsu, Hironori 大松博典. "Sodai tendaigaku to syuryogon gyo" 宋代天台学と首楞厳経. *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究. no. 1 (1988): 122-25.

Pan, Guiming 潘桂明. *Zhongguo ju shi fo jiao shi* 中國居士佛教史. Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 2000.

———. *Zhiyi Ping Zhuan* 智顗評傳. Nanjing: Nanjing da xue chu ban she, 1996.

———. and Zhongwei Wu 吳忠偉. *Zhongguo tiantai zong tong shi* 中國天台宗通史. Nanjing: Jiang su gu ji chu ban she, 2001.

Ren, Yimin 任宜敏. “Ming dai fo xue de yi xue chuan cheng－tiantai zong” 明代佛學的義學傳承－天台宗. *Ren wen za zhi* 人文雜誌. 4 (2006): 129-38.

Shen, Dingping 沈定平. *Ming Qing zhi ji zhong xi wen hua jiao liu shi* 明清之際中西文化交流史. Beijing: Shang wu yin shu guan, 2001.

Shengyan 釋聖嚴. *Ming mo fo jiao yan jiu* 明末佛教研究. Taipei: Fa gu wen hua, 1999.

———. *Minmatsu Chugoku Bukkyo no kenkyu : tokuni chigyo o chushin to shite* 明末中国佛教の研究 ： 特に智旭を中心として. Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin, 1975; Taipei: Fa gu wen hua, 1999.

———. *Ming mo Zhongguo fo jiao zhi yan jiu* 明末中國佛教之研究. Taipei: Taiwan xue sheng shu ju 臺灣學生書局. 1988.

Shih, Heng-Ching 釋恒清. “Foxing lun zhi yan jiu” 佛性論之研究 (A Study of the *Buddhadhātu-sāstra*). *Zhong yin fo xue fan lun* 中印佛學泛論 (*Discussion on Chinese and Indian Buddhism*). Ed. Charles W. Fu and Jifu Lan. Taipei: Dong da tu shu gu fen you xian gong si, 1993.

———. *Fo xing si xiang* 佛性思想 (*Buddha-nature Thought*). Taipei: Dong da tu shu gong si, 1997.

Song, Kejun 宋珂君. *Ming dai zong jiao xiao shuo zhong de fo jiao 'xiu xing' guan nian* 明代宗教小說中的佛教 「修行」 觀念. Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 2005.

Tang, Dachao 唐大潮. *Ming Qing zhi ji dao jiao 'san jiao he yi' si xiang lun* 明清之際道教「三教合一」思想論. Beijing: Zong jiao wen hua chu ban she, 2000.

Wang, Weizhen 汪維真. “Ming dai shan e bao ying guan nian de qiang hua yu she hui tiao kong” 明代善惡報應觀念的強化與社會調控. *Jiang han lun tan* 江漢論談. 1 (2005): 106-09.

Wang, Zhiyuan 王志遠. *Jin gan pi* 金剛錍 (*The Diamond Scalpel [of Zhanran]*). Taipei: Foguang, 1998.

———. *Song chu tiantai fo xue kui bao* 宋初天台佛學窺豹 (*A limited view of Tiantai Buddhism in the early Song*). Beijing: Zhongguo jian she chu ban she: Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing, 1989.

Wu, Congmin 吳聰敏. “Zhili 'Guan wu liang shou fo jing shu miao zong chao' yan jiu” 知禮《觀無量壽佛經疏妙宗鈔》研究. M.A. thesis. Quo li zhong xing da xue 國立中興大學, Taiwan, 2003.

Wu, Zhihe 吳智和, ed. *Ming shi cong kan* 明史叢刊. Taipei: Ming shi yan jiu xiao zu, 1996-.

Xie, Guozhen 謝國禎. *Ming Qing zhi ji dang she yun dong kao* 明清之際黨社運動考. Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1967.

Xinhaofashi 心皓法師. *Tiantai jiao zhi shi* 天台教制史. Sha men: Sha men ta xue chu ban she, 2007.

Yang, Weizhong 楊維中. *Xin xing yu fo xing: Zhongguo fo jiao xin xing lun ji qi xiang guan wen ti yan jiu* 心性與佛性: 中國佛教心性論及其相關問題研究. Taipei: Fo guang shan wen jiao ji jin hui, 2001.

———. "Tiantai zong 'xing ju shan e' guan lun xi" 天台宗「性具善惡」觀論析. *Ren wen za zhi* 人文雜誌. 3 (2004): 38-44.

You, Huizhen 尤惠貞. *Tiantai zong xing ju yuan jiao zhi yan jiu* 天台宗性具圓教之研究 (*Researches into the Tiantai Integrated Teaching of Nature-containment*). Taipei: Wen jin chu ban she, 1993.

Zhang, Mantao 張曼濤, ed. *Da sheng ji xin lun yu leng yan jing kao bian* 大乘起信論與楞嚴經考辨. *Xian dai fo jiao xue shu cong kan* 現代佛教學術叢刊. Vol. 35. Taipei: Da sheng wen hua chu ban she, 1978.

———, ed. *Tiantai si xiang lun ji* 天台思想論集. *Xian dai Fo jiao xue shu cong kan* 現代佛教學術叢刊. Vol. 57. Taipei: Da sheng wen hua chu ban she, 1979.

Zhao, Yuan 趙園. *Ming Qing zhi ji shi da fu yan jiu* 明清之際士大夫研究. Beijing: Beijing da xue chu ban she, 1999.

Zhou, Deliang 周德良. "Tiantai zong yu Xunzhi 'xing e' lun zhi bi jiao" 天台宗與荀子「性惡」論之比較. *E hu* 鵝湖. 26, no. 1 (2000): 5-11.

Zhou, Qi 周齊. *Ming dai fo jiao yu zheng zhi wen hua* 明代佛教与政治文化. Beijing: Ren min chu ban she, 2005.

Zhou, Shujia 周叔迦. *Qing dai fo jiao shi liao ji gao* 清代佛教史料輯稿. Ed. Jiang Canteng 江燦騰. *Fo jiao wen hua cong shu* 佛教文化叢書. Vol. 6. Taipei: Xin wen feng, 2000.

Zhu, Feng'ao 朱封鰲. "Tiantai shan li dai fo dao sheng kuang kao xi" 天台山歷代佛道盛況考析. *Dong nan wen hua* 東南文化. 2 (1994): 16-27.

———. *Tiantai zong shi ji kau cha yu dian ji yan jiu* 天台宗史跡考察與典籍研究. Shanghai: Shanghai ci shu chu ban she, 2004.

———. *Tiantai zong xiu chi yu tai mi tan suo* 天台宗修持與台密探索. Beijing: Zong jiao wen hua chu ban she, 2004.

———. *Zhonghua Tian tai zong tong shi* 中華天台宗通史. Beijing: Zong jiao wen hua chu ban she, 2001.

———. and Wei Yanduo 韋彥鐸. *Gaoming si zhi* 高明寺志. Beijing: Dang dai zhong guo chu ban she, 1995.

Ziporyn, Brook 任博克. *Shan Yu E* 善與惡. Trans. Wu Zhongwei 吳忠偉. Shang hai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2006.

C. Secondary Sources in English

Berling, Judith A. *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-En*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Bol, Peter Kees. *This Culture of Ours : Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Brook, Timothy. *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Buswell, Robert, ed. *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989.

Chen, Chi-wah. “Chih-Li (960-1028) and the Formation of Orthodoxy in the Sung T'ien-T'ai Tradition of Buddhism.” Ph.D. diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 1993.

———. “Chili (960-1028) and the Crisis of the T’ien-t’ai Buddhism in the Early Sung.” *Buddhism in the Sung*. Ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel Aaron Getz. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1999.

Chen, Jihua. *Making and Remaking History: A Study of Tiantai Sectarian Historiography*. Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies, 1999.

Ch’en, Kenneth. *Buddhism in China, a Historical Survey*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Ch‘ien, Edward T. *Chiao Hung and the Restructuring of Neo-Confucianism in the Late Ming*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Cleary, J. C. *Zibo: The Last Great Zen Master of China.* Berkeley, Calif.: AHP Paperbacks, 1989.

De Bary, William. *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

———. “Buddhism and the Chinese Tradition.” *Diogenes* 47 (1964): 102–24.

———. “Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought.” *Self and Society in*

Ming Thought. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970. 145-248.

———. *Learning for One's Self: Essays on the Individual in Neo-Confucian Thought*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Donner, Neal. “Chih-I's Meditation on Evil.” *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society*. Ed. David W. Chappell. Honolulu: University of Hawaii University of Hawaii Press, 1987. 49-64.

———. “Sudden and Gradual Intimately Conjoined: Chih-I's T'ien-T'ai View.” *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Buddhism*. Ed. Peter N. Gregory. Honolulu: University of Hawaii University of Hawaii Press, 1987. 201-221.

———, Daniel B. Stevenson, and Zhiyi. *The Great Calming and Contemplation: A Study and Annotated Translation of the First Chapter of Chih-I's Mo-Ho Chih-Kuan, Classics in East Asian Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993.

Epstein, Ronald B. “The Śūraṅgama-sūtra with Tripiṭaka Master Hsuan-hua’s Commentary ‘An Elementary Explanation of Its General Meaning’: A Preliminary Study and Partial Translation.” Ph.D. diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1975.

Farmer, Edward Lewis, Romeyn Taylor, and Ann Waltner. *Ming History: An Introductory Guide to Research.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994.

Getz, Daniel Aaron. “Siming Zhili and Tiantai Pure Land in the Song Dynasty.” Ph.D. diss. Yale University, 1994.

Gimello, Robert M. “Chih-yen (602-668) and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism.” Ph.D. diss. Columbia University, 1976.

Gregory, Peter N. *Tsung-Mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

———. and Daniel Aaron Getz, ed. *Buddhism in the Sung*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

Haar, B. J. ter. *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991.

Hakeda, Yoshito. *The Awakening of Faith*. New York: Columbia university press, 1967.

HsüanHua. *The Śūraṅgama Sūtra: A New Translation*. Ukiah, Calif: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2009.

Hsu, Sung-peng. *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-Shan Te-Chʻing*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978.

Hurvitz, Leon. “The First Systematizations of Buddhist Thought in China.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. 2 (1975a): 361-88.

Hymes, Robert. “Not Quite Gentlemen? Doctors in Sung and Yuan.” *Chinese Science* (Philadelphia) 8 (1987): 9–76.

———. *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002

King, Sallie Behn. *Buddha Nature*. State University of New York Press, 1991.

Lai, Whalen. “Non-Duality of the Two Truths in Sinitic Madhyamika: Origin of the ‘Third Truth.’” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. 2, no. 2 (1979): 45-65.

———. “A Clue to the Authorship of the Awakening of Faith: Śikṣānanda’s Redaction of the World ‘Nien.’” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. 2, no. 2 (1980): 34-53.

Langlois, J. D., and K. K. Sun. “Three Teachings Syncretism and the Thought of Ming T'ai-Tsu.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 43, no. 1 (1983): 97-139.

Nagao, Gajin. *The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy, Suny Series in Buddhist Studies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

———. and Leslie S. Kawamura. *Madhyamika and Yogacara: A Study of Mahayana Philosophies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

Ng, Yu-kwan. *T'ien-T'ai Buddhism and Early Madhyamika*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1993.

Overmyer, Daniel L. *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976.

———. *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999.

Paul, Diana Y. *Philosophy of Mind in Sixth-Century China: Paramārtha's Evolution of Consciousness*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford university press, 1984.

Penkower, Linda L. “T'ien-T'ai During the T'ang Dyansty: Chan-Jan and the Sinification of Buddhism.” Ph.D. diss. Columbia University, 1993.

Ra, Lang. E. “The T’ien-t’ai Philosophy of Non-duality: A Study in Chan-jan and Chi-li.” Ph.D. diss. Temple University, 1988.

Robinson, Richard H. *Early Madhyamika in India and China*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.

Sharf, Robert H. *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Stevenson, Daniel. “The Four Kinds of Samadhi in Early T'ien-T'ai Buddhism.” *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*. Ed. Peter N. Gregory. Honolulu:

University of Hawaii Press, 1986. 45-98.

Stone, Jacqueline Ilyse. *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

Swanson, Paul L. *Foundations of T'ien- T'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two-Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism*. Berkeley, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1989.

Twitchett, Denis Crispin and Frederick W. Mote, ed. *The Cambridge History of China*. Vol. 6, 7, 8. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 1995, 1998.

Welch, Holmes. *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Wilson, Thomas A. *Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Wu, Jiang. *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

———. "Knowledge for What? The Buddhist Concept of Learning in the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*." *Journal of Chinese philosophy.* 17, no. 4 (2009): 491-503.

Yü, Chün-fang. *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-Hung and the Late Ming Synthesis, Buddhist Studies and Translations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

———. "Ming Buddhism." *The Cambridge History of China* : *Vol. 8, the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part. 2.* Ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 893-952.

———. *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Ziporyn, Brook. "Anti-Chan Polemics in Post-Tang Tiantai." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. 17, no. 1 (1994): 26-63.

———. *Evil and/or/as The Good : Omnicentrism, Intersubjectivity and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought*. Cambridge, Mass.: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2000.

———. "Inherent Entailment (Xingju) and Negative Prehensions - Givenness, the Agency of the Past, and the Presence of the Absent in Whitehead and the T'ien-T'ai Reading of the 'Lotus Sutra.'" *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. 28, no. 4 (2001): 399-414.

———. *Being and Ambiguity: Philosophical Experiments with Tiantai Buddhism*. Chicago: Open Court, 2004.

———. “Setup, Punch Line, and the Mind-Body Problem: A Neo-Tiantai Approach.” *Philosophy East & West*. 50, no. 4 (2000): 584-613.

———. “Tiantai Buddhist Conceptions of ‘the Nature’ (xing) and Its Relation to the Mind.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. 37, no. 3 (2010): 493-512.

———. “Li (Principle, Coherence) in Chinese Buddhism.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. 30 (2003): 501-524.

Zürcher, Erik. *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread of Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.